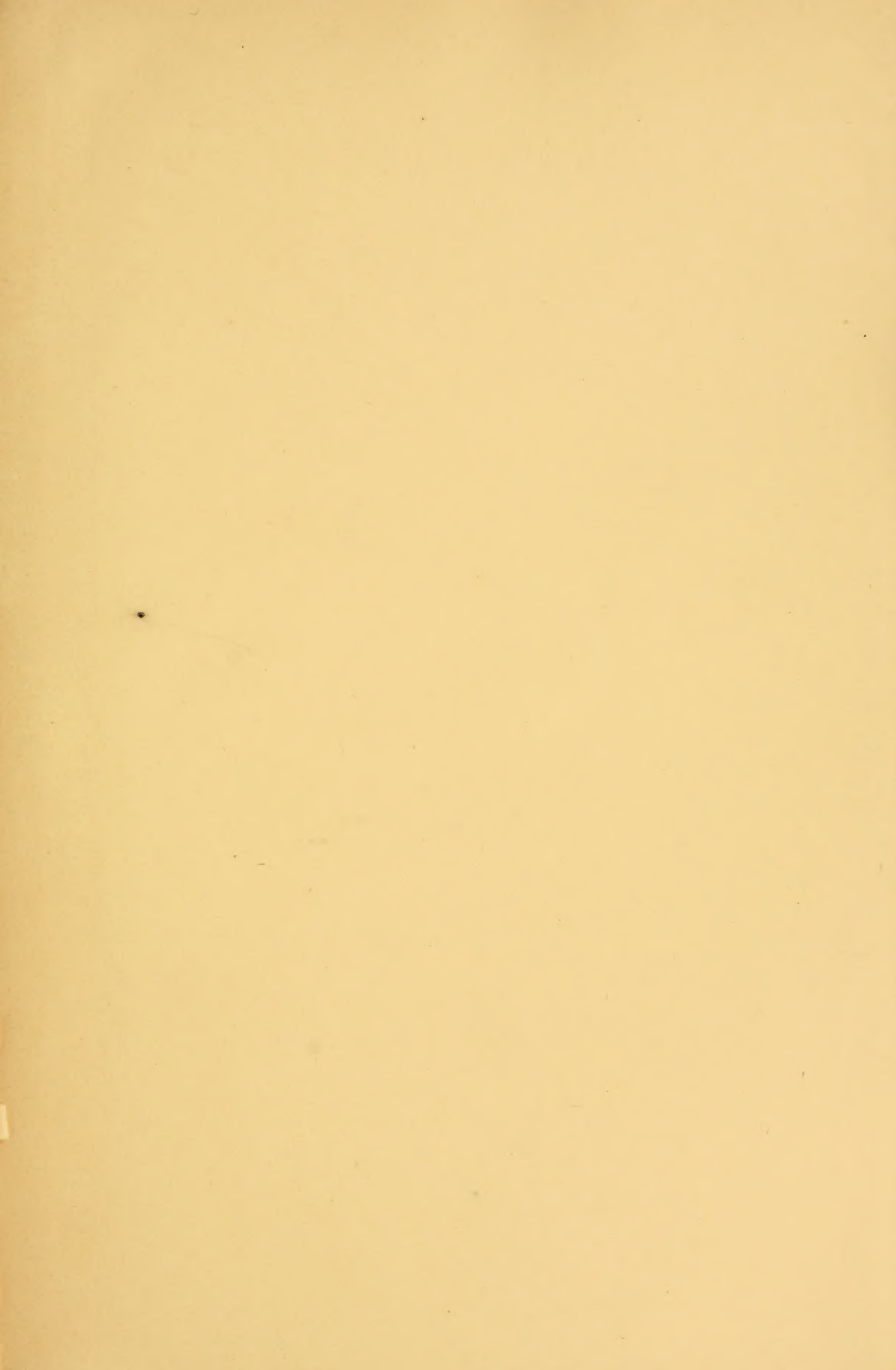






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Thirty thousand thoughts















THIRTY THOUSAND THOUGHTS.



*SECTION XV*

WITH SECTIONAL INDEX.





# THIRTY THOUSAND THOUGHTS,

BEING

EXTRACTS COVERING A COMPREHENSIVE CIRCLE OF  
RELIGIOUS AND ALLIED TOPICS,

GATHERED FROM THE BEST AVAILABLE SOURCES, OF ALL AGES AND ALL SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT;  
WITH SUGGESTIVE AND SEMINAL HEADINGS, AND HOMILETICAL  
AND ILLUMINATIVE FRAMEWORK :  
THE WHOLE ARRANGED UPON A SCIENTIFIC BASIS.

WITH

CLASSIFIED AND THOUGHT-MULTIPLYING LISTS, COMPARATIVE TABLES, AND ELABORATE  
INDICES, ALPHABETICAL, TOPICAL, TEXTUAL, AND SCRIPTURAL.

EDITED BY THE

VERY REV. H. D. M. SPENCE, M.A.,

REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A.,

REV. CHARLES NEIL, M.A.



XV. CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS (*Concluded*).

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## PREFACE.

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AFTER considerably curtailing the eschatological articles, room has been found in the present volume for the remainder of the Christian Dogmatic main section. With a view to remove the inconvenience which might arise from the impossibility of this section—on account of its size and importance—appearing in a single volume, a syllabus of the whole is given on the two following pages, and also an entire index in the appendix.

In order to render this part of the work manageable, not only have the antecedent department of Christian Apologetics, and the subsequent department of Ethics in its distinctive form, been separately treated, but relief sections, such as those for "The Divine Attributes," "The Titles of the Holy Ghost," etc., have been formed.

It is believed that this arrangement has several advantages. Without wishing to narrow a right breadth of view in religion, it must be conceded that the main fundamental and moral truths of Christianity are usually not sufficiently viewed as a connected system, with each part related to every other as well as to the sum total. By a judicious use of the Table exhibiting the classified contents, the place of any truth in Christian theology proper can be readily found, and light be reflected upon it from its allied topics. By this means the teacher will be enabled to throw fresh interest into well-worn and, may be, not very attractive homiletical themes. Besides, connected teaching will be assisted by the progressive and continuous presentation of leading doctrines of faith and practice. The Divisions F to I, in particular, which treat of the means of grace, Christian excellences, duties and privileges, together with the ultimate rewards, cannot fail to be useful to those accustomed to take courses of sermons, either during special seasons, as Lent, or on other suitable occasions. At all events, though the student may be oppressed with endless theological treatises by authors, who often do little more than re-echo in slightly altered tone the sentiments of their predecessors in the same field; still the comprehensive study of the practical duties of the Christian life cannot be pursued from any single treatise. Indeed, not overmuch sermonic help really exists in extant theological works, either of a doctrinal or practical character. For the former prove either too professional or polemical; while the latter are too hortatory, mystical, or specific in treatment.

In the selection of the extracts for the present volume much thought and pains have been expended in fixing guiding principles. It has been considered best to omit, as far as possible, excerpts which would delight the mere theological philosopher, or the humanitarian religionist who eschews dogma altogether. In the place of cold and uninviting dogmatic utterances, as well as of vapid sentimentalism, there have been inserted quotations, of Christian truth, earnestly and lovingly proclaimed. From the enlightened, vigorous, and devout writers of different schools of thought, as represented in these pages, some new or clearer light, it is trusted, will dawn upon the reader. Truth, when freed from narrow statements, is always discovered to be many-sided; and its hidden beauties are not the possession of any one order of mind, of any one class, of any one nationality, or of any one age.

This Section has been prepared with a deepening sense of the fact that the catholicity of Divine Revelation shows itself alike in the Gospel being simple enough for the comprehension of each individual mind, as also in its being so sublime and profound as to require, under Divine guidance, the catholic mind of the whole body politic of Christians for its complete realization, and for the exhibition of its infinitely varied and various aspects.

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# RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

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## DIVISION D. (Continued.)

### THE WORK AND OFFICE OF GOD THE SON IN REDEMPTION.

#### 2

#### CHRIST'S SINLESS LIFE AND PERFECT MERITS.

##### I. THE ESSENTIAL SINLESSNESS OF CHRIST.

###### 1 Survey of the doctrine.

*The Christian Church has always held that Christ was absolutely free from sin.*

[13421] To the minds of the apostles the perfect sinlessness of their Divine Master presented itself as an unquestionable fact, and this view continued to prevail, through the period immediately succeeding, in the development of the Church's doctrine of the person and work of Christ. No explicit statement of it seems to have been made or deemed necessary, but the allusions in the early ecclesiastical writers show that the doctrine was neither rejected as unfounded nor ignored as unimportant. Tertullian inferred the sinlessness of Christ from His divinity; Origen regarded it as a peculiar property of the human soul of Christ, resulting from its union with the Divine Logos, by whose virtue it was interpenetrated as red-hot iron is by fire, so that sin became for him an impossibility. Apollinaris, setting out with the belief that human nature implies limitation, mutability, conflict, sin, &c., held that no man can be a perfect man without sin; and in order to preserve, consistently with this view, the sinlessness of Christ, sacrificed His true humanity by adopting the opinion that the Logos took the place of the human soul in Christ, and imparted to Him an irresistible tendency to the good. Athanasius held the doctrine of a sinless, yet perfectly human, nature in Christ, arguing that sin does not belong to human nature *per se*, which was originally pure and sinless; and that Christ could, consequently, assume the nature of man without thereby being made subject to sin, and thus, by His perfect life as a man, become man's exemplar and guide in his conflict with evil and progress towards the good. At the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) the doctrine of Christ's true, yet sinless, manhood was formulized in the words, "truly man, with a rational soul and body of like essence with us

as to His manhood, and in all things like us, sin excepted;" and there has not since been any change within the accepted Christological doctrine of the Church.—*Prof. J. W. Marshall.*

[13422] While our Lord's infinite love to us led Him to humble Himself so as to become flesh, His infinite purity could not endure that He should defile Himself with sinful flesh. The nature which He took was a sinless nature. It had all the essential properties of manhood, but it was without sin. Our Lord was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, not *in* sinful flesh. His birth of the Virgin Mary gave Him thus much in common with us, that He was as truly man as we are. His conception by the Holy Ghost distinguished Him from all other men, in that He was wholly free from whatsoever of sin and guilt we have inherited from our first father. And therefore, even before He was conceived in the womb, He was spoken of as that holy thing which should be born. He alone, of all the sons of men, since the fall, was so born that He needed not to be born again. That which we become at our regeneration, He was, though in an infinitely higher and more perfect sense, at His natural birth. And His being such at His natural birth is the cause of our becoming such at our second birth.—*C. A. Heurtley, B.D.*

###### 2 Old Testament prefigurations of, and New Testament witnesses to, its truth.

[13423] The coming of such a Redeemer was prefigured in the worship and sacrifices of patriarchal times, in the separation and Temple services of the Jewish nation, and in those holy men who from time to time appeared as lights amidst the darkness of the world. Throughout all these preparatory manifestations, the idea of the sinlessness of the coming Messiah appears. In the spotless victims, in the purifying services, in the strains of the poets of Israel, and in the magnificent imagery and language of the prophets are found, more or less complete, the elements whose union culminates in the idea of the sinless Son of God and Redeemer of men (Isa. ix., xl., xlii.; Jer. xxxi. 31 sq.; Ezek. xxxvi. 8 sq., &c.). The New Testament

writings bear unequivocal and harmonious testimony to the truth of this doctrine. Christ is described in them as the Holy One, the Just and Righteous (Acts iii. 14, xxii. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 18; 1 John ii. 1, 29, iii. 7); as tempted "like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15); as our example, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Pet. xi. 21, 22); as "a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 19); as "an high priest who is holy, harmless, undefiled" . . . "who needeth not daily to offer sacrifices" "for His own sins," as other priests did (Heb. vii. 26, 27); as the Mediator "who knew no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21). These writings, indeed, are full of proofs that His apostles and followers recognized in Christ, because of His holiness, as well as His wonder-working power, the Messiah foretold by prophecy, coming in the fulness of the Divine Spirit to be the Founder, Lawgiver, and King of the kingdom of God on earth. Christ no less unequivocally claims for Himself such perfection of nature and life, in the assumption of oneness with God (John x. 30), in the fact that He nowhere prays for forgiveness of His own sins, or recognizes that sin exists in Himself, and, specifically, in the expression "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (John viii. 46).—*Prof. J. W. Marshall.*

### 3 Testimony borne to this truth by the unique character of Christ's life and teaching.

[13424] Where falsehood and hypocrisy seek to assume the appearance of goodness, it always happens that, being inexperienced in the region of love and truth, it attaches itself involuntarily to custom, mimics what is in some circles regarded as exquisitely pious or strictly moral, be it even in the inventing of new artistic or striking forms, which suit the prevailing moral tone on the one hand, and excite astonishment on the other, but has neither courage nor strength for the simplicity of moral originality. For where would be the desired success of the deception if one did not, perhaps in an exaggerated way, use and pay his way with the sign-language or coin which was already current? Now we perceive that, in this very department, Jesus broke with the customary views and hopes of whatever was just, and pious, and good, and with the representatives of them; that He came into violent collision with them, and that He, with creative originality, set forth in His teaching, life, and suffering, a view of the good, directly opposed to the prevailing one, appealing to the primitive moral sense in man, commending itself to susceptible minds (much like a genuine work of art), and overmastering them. That was only possible if He Himself was possessed and filled by the glory of the truly and essentially good, which He knew and brought to light, seeking nothing but its victory and prevalence.—*Dorner.*

[13425] It is not an arbitrary procedure, but simply the necessity of the case, to see in

Christ, so far as sinlessness is attributed to Him, a Divine revelation of God, which, by realizing, discloses the archetype of holiness; which revelation could only be brought to pass through the medium of an unique distinctive being of God in Him, by which the image of God attained to actual representation in the world.—*Ibid.*

### 4 Testimony borne to this truth by His supreme self-consciousness of perfect freedom from all taint of guilt.

[13426] But the silence of Jesus respecting any sense of personal unworthiness has been accounted for by the unrivalled closeness of His life-long communion with God. Is it then certain that the holiest souls are least alive to personal sin? Do they whose life of thought is little less than the breath of a perpetual prayer, and who dwell continuously in the presence-chamber of the King of kings, profess themselves insensible to that taint of sin, from which none are altogether free? Is this the lesson which we learn from the language of the best of the servants of God? My brethren, the very reverse is the case. Those who have lived nearest to God, and have known most about Him, and have been most visibly irradiated by the light of His countenance, have been foremost to acknowledge that the "burden" of remaining imperfection in themselves was truly "intolerable." Their eager protestations have often seemed to the world to be either the exaggerations of fanaticism, or else the proof of a more than ordinary wickedness. For blemishes which might have passed unobserved in a spiritual twilight are lighted up with torturing clearness by those searching, scorching rays of moral truth, that stream from the bright sanctity of God upon the soul that beholds it. In that Presence the holiest of creatures must own with the Psalmist, "Thou has set our misdeeds before Thee, and our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." Such self-accusing, broken-hearted confessions of sin have been the utterances of men the most conspicuous in Christendom for holiness of life; and no true saint of God ever supposed that by a constant spiritual sight of God the soul would lose its keen truthful sense of personal sinfulness. No man could presume that this sense of sinfulness, as distinct from the sense of unpardoned guilt, would be banished by close communion with God, unless his moral standard was low, and his creed imperfect. Any such presumption is utterly inconsistent with a true sight of Him whose severe and stainless beauty casts the shadow of failure upon all that is not Himself, and who charges His very angels with moral folly. Yet Jesus Christ never once confesses sin; He never once asks for pardon. Is it not He who so sharply rebukes the self-righteousness of the Pharisee? Might He not seem to ignore all human piety that is not based upon a broken heart? Does He not deal with human nature at large as the true prodigal, who must penitently return to a Father's love as the one condition of

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its peace and bliss? Yet He Himself never lets fall a hint, He Himself never breathes a prayer, which implies any, the slightest, trace of a personal remorse. From no casual admission do we gather that any, the most venial sin, has ever been His. Never for one moment does He associate Himself with any passing experience of that anxious dread of the penal future with which His own awful words must needs fill the sinner's heart. If His soul is troubled, at least His moral sorrows are not His own; they are a burden laid on Him by His love for others.—*Canon Liddon.*

[13427] Here is a man in whom there is no trace of remorse, regret, or repentance, a man without care about His soul's salvation, for He stands already in eternal life, He lives as in heaven. There is no prayer for forgiveness of sin for Himself, no shrinking from going into the society of publicans and sinners. It is clear, in the most decided moments of His life, that He is conscious of no sin. That His self-consciousness was really of such a sort that His conscience never accused Him of any fault or error, is the firmest and most indisputable historical fact, explain it as we may.—*Dorner.*

[13428] There is one fact which ought to remove every shadow of doubt as to the absolute sinlessness of Jesus. . . . He was utterly free from self-accusation, from the consciousness of fault; whereas, had there been a failure in duty, His sense of guilt would have been intense and overwhelming. This must have been the case had there been only a single lapse—one instance, even in thought, of infidelity to God and conscience. But no such offence could have existed by itself: it would have tainted the character. Sin does not come and disappear, like a passing cloud. Sin is never a microscopic taint. Sin is self-propagating. Its first step is a fall and the beginning of a bondage. We reiterate that a consciousness of moral defect in such an one as we know that Jesus was, and as He is universally conceded to have been, must infallibly have betrayed itself in the clearest manifestations of conscious guilt, of penitence or of remorse. The extreme delicacy of His moral sense is perfectly obvious. His moral criticism goes down to the secret recesses of the heart. He demands, be it observed, self-judgment: "First cast the beam out of thine own eye;" "Judge not." His condemnation of moral evil is utterly unsparring: the very roots of it in illicit desire are to be extirpated. He knows how sinful men are. He teaches them all to pray, "Forgive us our debts;" yet there is not a scintilla of evidence that He ever felt the need of offering that prayer for Himself. From beginning to end there is not a lip of self-blame. He prays often, He needs help from above; but there is no confession of personal unworthiness. Men generally are reminded of their sins when they are overtaken by calamity. The ejaculations of Jesus in the presence of His intimate associates, when He was sinking under the burden of mental

sorrow, are transmitted—and there is no appearance whatever of a disposition on the part of disciples to cloak His mental experiences, or misrepresent them—but not the slightest consciousness of error is betrayed in these spontaneous outpourings of the soul.—*G. D. Fisher.*

[13429] That sensitiveness of conscience which accompanies pure character recognizes and deplores the presence of sin. If there are not positive offences, there are defects: things are left undone which ought to be done. If there are no definite habits of feeling to be condemned, there is a conscious lack of a due energy of holy principle. In those who are deemed, and justly deemed, the most virtuous, and in whom there is no tendency to morbid self-depreciation, there are deep feelings of penitence. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." This is quoted here, not as being an authoritative testimony, but as the utterance of one whose standard of character was obviously the highest. With such an ideal of human perfection, the very thought that any man should consider himself sinless excites indignation. One who pronounces himself blameless before God proves that falsehood, and not truth, governs his judgment. What shall be said, then, if there be One of whom it can truly be affirmed, that every motive of His heart, not less than every overt action, was exactly confirmed to the loftiest ideal of excellence—One in whom there was never the faintest self-condemnation, or the least ground for such an emotion? There is a miracle; not, indeed, on the same plane as miracles which interrupt the sequences of natural law. It is an event in another order of things than the material sphere. But it is equally an exception to all human experience. It is equally to all who discern the fact a proclamation of the immediate presence of God. It is equally an attestation that He who is thus marked out in distinction from all other members of the race bears a Divine commission. There is a break in the uniform course of things, to which no cause can be assigned in the natural order. Such a phenomenon authorizes the same inference as that which is drawn from the instantaneous cure, by a word, of a man born blind.—*Ibid.*

##### 5 Untenableness of Ewald's counter-doctrine of Christ's person.

[13430] How came Jesus of Nazareth to be sinless, the only sinless one, and as such, above all men as heaven is above the earth? If it be said there is no greater mystery in this moral originality than in original genius in any other department; if He is sinless only as having reached the goal towards which humanity aspires unceasingly, then we have exhibited to us a conception of the nature of sin, which the Christian heart will reject even with strong reprobation; for sin is then regarded only as a creaturely limitation, as imperfection, and the very pith and marrow are extracted from our thoughts concerning its inherent badness and



guilt. If it were said that Christ became sinless by a moral process, disentangling Himself from the meshes of the world's ungodliness, the difficulty would be less considerable; but the unique and incomparable thing in Christ is, that He did not become, but is sinless from the beginning, that in Him is no trace of a moral struggle to overcome inward contradictions, and that He alone knows nothing of moral wretchedness, of repentance, and confession, and regret, and has no need of pardon or grace. It is therefore impossible to regard Him as a link in the chain of humanity. He is infinitely different from all men. Those who are likest Him and nearest Him, feel His moral distance to be the greatest; and the mind cannot rest satisfied till it has found an explanation of His person, which conserves at once the sense of His absolute similarity to man, and transcendent superiority—till it has reached the idea of the God-man, in the supernatural and metaphysical sense, and cried, My Lord and my God!—*W. Salmond.*

#### 6 Objections urged against this truth.

(1) *That the idea of sinlessness is inconsistent with growth in wisdom and moral development (see Luke ii. 52).*

[13431] Growth and development do not necessarily or commonly imply imperfection. A human being, possessing in infancy and boyhood the maturity and complete development of manhood and age, would be a monstrosity. We expect from infancy, youth, manhood, and age what befits each period, and regard as irregular and imperfect what is contrary thereto. Again, finite nature is not necessarily imperfect. The perfect action of such a nature in conformity with the laws and limitations of its being cannot be sinful, or evidence of imperfection as finite existence, but just the contrary.—*Prof. J. W. Marshall.*

[13432] Not as if that nature, which was perfect from the beginning, received increase, but that by degrees it was manifested. For the law of nature brooks not that man should have higher faculties than the age of his body permits. The Word (made man) was perfect, but He manifested Himself as man with a body, gradually advancing in growth, and was daily thought wiser by those who saw and heard Him.—*St. Cyril.*

[13433] A remarkable expression is used in the closing part of the second chapter of Luke, which brings up the question of the development of the Divine and the human nature of Christ mysteriously united within one frame. We are told at the fortieth verse that "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him." At the fifty-second verse, again, we read that Jesus "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." We do not hold the old Monophysite doctrine that Christ had only one soul within His body of flesh. To be a true man He must have had both a human

body and a human soul, besides that Divine nature which was linked to and glorified the whole. We can no more tell how the human and the Divine Spirit were blended together in Him, than how the human body and soul are united together. Yet it is plain that His mind as well as His body developed just like those of other children, although the Divine part of His nature was ever, from time to time, and especially after His public manifestation, flooding His human soul with more and more of heaven-born light as well as imparting to His body supernatural capabilities. Any illustrations on so high a theme which we can employ must ever fall far short of the truth, yet it is not irreverent to employ them within acknowledged limitations. Have we not all known youths born with a wonderful genius in one particular direction—say the mathematical, the arithmetical, the poetical, or musical? But their other abilities were by no means remarkable; so that this high faculty with which they were endowed required to wait upon the maturity of the rest, in order to get a sufficient fulcrum for its own manifestation to the world.—*Fergus Ferguson, D.D.*

(2) *That several passages in the life of Jesus betray a passionate severity.*

[13434] Complaints have been made of the severity of His denunciation of the Pharisees. Theodore Parker has given voice to this criticism. It is just these passages, however, and such as these, which save Christianity from the stigma cast upon it by the patronizing critics who style it "a sweet Galilean vision," and find in it nothing but a solace "for tender and weary souls." It is no fault in the teaching of Jesus that in it righteousness speaks out in trumpet-tones. There is no unseemly passion, but there is no sentimentalism. Hypocrisy and cruelty are painted in their proper colours. That retribution is stored up for the iniquity which steels itself against the motives to reform is a part of the gospel which no right-minded man would wish to blot out; it is a truth too clearly manifest in the constitution of things, too deeply graven on the consciences of men. The spotless excellence of Jesus needs no vindication against objections of this nature.—*G. D. Fisher.*

[13435] The apparent outbreak of passion in the expulsion of the profane traffickers from the temple is the only instance on the record of His history which might be quoted against His freedom from the faults of humanity. But the very effect which it produced shows that, far from being the outburst of passion, the expulsion was a judicial act of a religious reformer, vindicating, in just and holy zeal, the honour of the Lord of the temple, and that with a dignity and majesty which at once silenced the offenders, though superior in number and physical strength, and made them submit to their well-deserved punishment without a murmur, and in awe of the presence of a superhuman power. The age of the unfruitful fig-tree can still less be

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[CHRIST'S SINLESS LIFE AND PERFECT MERITS.]

urged, as it evidently was a significant symbolical act foreshadowing the fearful doom of the impenitent Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem.—*Prof. Schaff.*

[13436] The objections advanced by M. F. Pecant in his *Le Christ et la Conscience*, 1859, are plainly a result of that writer's Humanitarianism. Our Lord's answers to His Mother, His cursing the barren fig-tree, His sending the devils into the herd of swine, His driving the money-changers from the temple, and His last denunciations against the Pharisees, present no difficulty to those who see in Him the Lord, as well as the Son of Mary, the Maker and Owner of the world of nature, the Searcher and Judge of human hearts.—*Canon Liddon.*

(3) *That Christ Himself disclaims the title of good* (see *Mark x. 18*).

[13437] To the ruler who inquired what he should do to inherit eternal life, Jesus is said to have answered, "Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God." There is another reading of the passage in Matthew, which is adopted by Tischendorf: "Why askest thou Me concerning the good? There is one," &c. This answer is not unsuitable to the question, "What good thing shall I do?" It points the inquirer to God. It is fitted to suggest that goodness is not in particular doings, but begins in a connecting of the soul with God. We cannot be certain, however, whether Jesus made exactly this response, or said what is given in the parallel passages in Mark and Luke (and in the accepted text of Matthew). If the latter hypothesis is correct, it is still plain that the design of Jesus was to direct the inquirer to God, whose will is the fountain of law. He disclaims the epithet "good," and applies it to God alone, meaning that God is the primal source of all goodness. Such an expression is in full accord with the usual language of Jesus descriptive of His dependence on God. The goodness of Jesus, though without spot or flaw, was progressive in its development; and this distinction from the absolute goodness of God might justify the phraseology which He employed. The humility which Jesus evinced in His reply to the ruler was not that of an offender against the Divine law. Its ground was totally diverse.—*G. D. Fisher.*

[13438] The meaning of His reply depends upon that of the inquirer in his use of the word "good"; and nothing is plainer than that the ruler used it without any true perception of what it implies, in a superficial manner, and as a mere compliment; corresponding to his imperfect apprehension of his own sinfulness. In that sense our Lord refused the epithet, intimating further that if it was to be applied to Him at all, it must be so in the highest sense, even as it is applicable to God; which, far from implying a consciousness of sin, rather implies the reverse.—*Litton.*

(4) *That His baptism argued a need of repentance.*

[13439] To say nothing of the Baptist's indirect testimony to His having no sin to repent of ("Comest Thou to me?")—a testimony doubly valuable as coming from one who had probably been intimate with Jesus from His childhood—Jesus in His reply does not ground His request on the consciousness of sin, but on the duty of complying with divinely appointed ordinances (Matt. iii. 15). Made under the law, He was circumcised, though the symbol in His case lost its proper meaning; and similarly He submitted to John's baptism, which to Him was only the inauguration of His public ministry (Matt. iii. 16). With respect to the other point, our ignorance of His previous life, it is enough to remark that moral perfection such as that which the Gospels exhibit could not, without a special miracle, appear all of a sudden, and *per saltum*. Each stage of advancement presupposes a former one, and the final result is always founded upon a previous history. "As is the seed sown, such is the harvest. And if it be further urged that Christ may have attained the moral eminence which all ascribe to Him as He appears in the Gospels in the same way as ordinary men, viz., through inward conflict, sometimes overcome by sin, but on the whole overcoming, until the measure of holiness of which He was capable was attained, we reply that, apart altogether from original sin, one actual sin consented to leaves indelible traces behind it; the wound may be healed, but the scar remains. No man who, even for a moment, consents to an act of sin, inward or outward, can be the same man as he was before; and hence in the case of ordinary Christians sinlessness in this life is impossible. If Christ had not been without sin in His private life He could not have been what He was in His public.—*Ibid.*

## 7 Question raised on the subject.

(1) *Was Jesus unable to sin, or able not to sin?*

[13440] To say that He was able not to sin, and did not, is an inadequate statement. It is no more than was true of Adam before the fall. It expresses only the human side of His character. But taking into account the Divine, as the dominating force, a moral inability to sin is essential to the whole truth. We may say He was able to sin if He willed to; but considering that His whole moral being was strongly set against it, and that it was the purpose of God to destroy sin in the world through sinlessness in Him, we are obliged to say, in justice to His Divine-human person, He could not will to sin. Yet not by physical restraint or force, but in the freedom of His holy nature, and in the bias of His whole being towards God. The inner man, unfolded by a free, Divine-human impulse, in spotless purity and perfect self-harmony—the affections with the appetites, the imagination with the reason, the will with the understanding.—*Prof. E. A. Lawrence.*

[13441-13445]

[13441] The predicate which affirms the impossibility of sinning can be applied to God alone; of Him it is true in the absolute necessity of His nature—a necessity which is identical with the highest liberty. The idea of a God who could sin, or who could be really tempted to sin, were an absurdity: God and sin are two conceptions which absolutely exclude each other. The possibility of not sinning we must ascribe to man in the abstract—to man, viewed as the creature fresh from the hand of the Creator. This possibility is implied in his liberty, by which he is as yet fully free to abstain from sin. Sinlessness, in the practical sense, can be predicated only of a certain individual. That individual must be one in whose case the impossibility of sinning does not follow at once from a necessity of his nature; who, in other words, is susceptible of being tempted. On the other hand, he must be one whom we may believe endowed with an integrity of moral nature, by means of which the possibility of not sinning is his. In a case where both these conditions are fulfilled, the development of a life altogether pure and holy is conceivable: a life it would be which we should have to regard as at once typically perfect—raised far above everything which history tells us of, and, at the same time, as truly human; and this is what we hold the moral character and life of Jesus to have been.—*Human Sinlessness of Jesus.*

## II. HIS SUPREME MORAL DIGNITY.

### 1 Its varied manifestations.

[13442] His moral character, as it addresses us in the Gospels, bears not the impress of any particular time or nationality, but reveals the eternal beauty of general morality, of the generally human in the deepest sense, refreshing, humbling, and yet elevating the inmost heart of every age and race and century to which His image is unveiled. His portrait, as the evangelists sketch it for us, with the emphasis of artless simplicity, the strength of which lies in its truth, places before every susceptible mind a historical phenomenon, in the splendour of a moral idea and moral truth, in the loveliness and power of reality. In the contemplation of Him, the seeker after a living knowledge of human good stops to breathe again; here he rests, for every one's conscience shouts, as it were, exulting to Him, as to the ultimate appearance of the man, or as to the conscience of mankind now become an objective and living reality. Moreover, what He carried on as His calling did not lie, as with us, on a single region of human existence, but it is directed to what is central, to the setting of mankind right in their relation to God, and to the truly human in man generally, whence the renewing life-blood flows into all the regions of human existence. In this, too, lies the marvel of His character, that His acting and discourse do not run into the vague and the abstract; His character does not leave the impression of the flat, the feeble, the tame, the monotonous.

Rather, we must say, so far as one understands by individuality the opposite to the undefined and undeveloped, that He exhibits the most definite and clearly marked character. His peculiar distinguishing individuality just lies in this, that He exhibits in His own person the essentially and the truly human, and that, too, in a manner fraught with saving power. The delusion is common that the good in itself would be monotonous and tame, and that it is indebted for its loveliness and colour, not to its creative power and originality, but to the evil, its opposite. The picture of this life-full finished character is the triumph over the dead opinion, which makes good the eternal debtor of evil, and evil and death the dispenser of life.—*Dorner.*

[13443] What so great as that the Son of God came down into our world; did put on man; lived a lifetime among us mortals; breathed everywhere heavenly love, and grace, and sweetness; and with these grateful odours perfumed this noisome, impure, forlorn region of darkness and death; died a sacrifice for sinners, and overcame death; ascended in triumph to the throne of God; sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high?—*J. Howe, 1681.*

[13444] Now learn what this meaneth. Whatsoever a man steals and takes contrary to his right, he dares not lay aside, from fear lest it perish and fall from his possession, but he keeps hold of it continually. He who possesses a dignity which is natural to him, fears not to descend from that dignity. As, for example, when a man rebels against his sovereign and usurps the kingdom, he dares not lay aside or conceal the matter, for if he once put it away, straightway it is gone. They who have obtained aught by rapine are afraid to lay it by, or put it away, or not to keep constantly in that state which they have assumed. Not so they who have possessions not procured by rapine. What do we say, then? That the Son of God feared not to descend from His right, for Deity was not to Him a matter of robbery; He was not afraid that any would strip Him of that nature or that right, wherefore He laid it aside, being confident that He should take it up again. He hid it, knowing that He was not made inferior by so doing. He possessed not that estate by robbery; it was natural, not conferred, it was enduring and safe. Wherefore He refused not to take the form of an inferior. The usurping tyrant fears to lay aside the purple robe in war, while the king does it in safety. Why so? Because he holds his power not as a matter of robbery. Christ did not refuse to lay it aside as one who had usurped it, but since He had it as His own by nature, since it could never be parted from Him, He concealed it.—*St. Chrysostom.*

[13445] Never was a character at the same time so commanding and natural, so resplendent



and pleasing, so amiable and venerable. There is a peculiar contrast in it between an awful greatness, dignity, and majesty, and the most conciliating loveliness, tenderness, and softness. He now converses with prophets, lawgivers, and angels; and the next instant He meekly endures the dulness of His disciples, and the blasphemies and rage of the multitude. He now calls Himself greater than Solomon; one who can command legions of angels, and giver of life to whomsoever He pleases; the Son of God, and who shall sit on His glorious throne to judge the world; at other times we find Him embracing young children, . . . calling His disciples not servants, but friends and brethren, and comforting them with an exuberant and parental affection. Let us pause an instant and fill our minds with the idea of one who knew all things, heavenly and earthly, searched and laid open the inmost recesses of the heart, rectified every prejudice, and removed every mistake of a moral and religious kind, by a word exercised a sovereignty over all nature, penetrated the hidden events of futurity, gave promises of admission into a happy immortality, had the keys of life and death, claimed an union with the Father, and yet was mild, gentle, humble, affable, social, benevolent, friendly, and affectionate. Such a character is fairer than the morning star. Each separate virtue is made stronger by opposition and contrast, and the union of so many virtues forms a brightness which fitly represents the glory of that God "who inhabiteth light inaccessible." Such a character must have been a real one. There is something so extraordinary, so perfect, and so godlike in it, that it could not have been thus supported throughout by the utmost stretch of human art, much less by men confessedly unlearned and obscure.—*Abp. Newcome.*

[13446] It is the grandeur of Christ's character which constitutes the chief power of His ministry, not His miracles or teachings apart from His character. The greatest truth of the gospel is Christ Himself—a human body become the organ of the Divine nature, and revealing, under the conditions of an earthly life, the glory of God.—*Horace Bushnell, D.D.*

[13447] If the life and death of Socrates be those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus Christ are those of a God.—*Rousseau.*

[13448] His life was like an open stream that keeps the sea from flowing up into it by the eager force with which it flows down into the sea.—*P. Brooks.*

[13449] We see power, but it is power which is rather our security than our dread; a power softened with tenderness and soothing while it awes. With all the gentleness of a meek and lowly mind, we behold an heroic firmness which no terrors could restrain. In the private scenes of life, and in the public occupations of His ministry, whether the object of admiration or ridicule, of love or of persecution, whether

welcomed with hosannas, or insulted with anathemas, we still see Him pursuing, with unwearied constancy, the same end, and preserving the same integrity of life and manners.—*White's Sermons.*

[13450] It would be an omission here not to take notice of the benevolent use to which Jesus ever applied His knowledge of mankind. While the brilliant poet, the ambitious writer, the artful statesman, and the unscrupulous money-maker are so often guilty of employing their acquaintance with the human heart, to further their own sensual or selfish purposes, our holy Master touched the secret springs of our nature only to bless and heal. He lighted the pure flame of love and truth on the altar of the soul, not the smouldering fires of lust and passion. He dealt as a brother with erring brethren, and never took advantage of their weakness or ignorance. God give us grace to imitate the magnanimous trait of our high exemplar.—*Livermore.*

[13451] All the virtues which appeared in Christ shone brightest in the close of His life, under the trials He then met. Eminent virtue always shows brightest in the fire. Pure gold shows its purity chiefly in the furnace. It was chiefly under those trials which Christ endured in the close of His life that His love to God, His honour of God's majesty, His regard to the honour of His law, His spirit of obedience, His humility, contempt of the world, His patience, meekness, and spirit of forgiveness towards men, appeared. Indeed, everything that Christ did to work out redemption for us appears mainly in the close of His life. Here mainly is His satisfaction for sin, and here chiefly is His merit of eternal life for sinners, and here chiefly appears the brightness of His example which He has set us for imitation.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

[13452] Before a human character better than our own we are often assailed with malicious jealousy, envy, and the hate of criticism. It is a fellow-man! How comes He with a purity above us? But before Christ the soul loses all malevolence, and is lost in worship. He is out of the sphere of possible rivalry. He is too grand for aught but adoration.—*Haynes.*

## 2 Its necessity to the Atonement.

[13453] In the single consideration that not one but innumerable multitudes are to be saved by the expiatory process, there is sufficient evidence that the victim employed in it must possess a height of personal dignity, and a vastness of moral influence, which far exceed our proper comprehension. The injury which the oblation of it is intended to repair includes the daring defiance given to the law by the high-handed revolt of numberless millions, the demoralization which they have perpetrated upon the pristine excellence of their moral constitution, and a long accumulation by them of the most offensive and putrid masses of moral abomination. An amount of mischief so incalculably extensive, amassed by the deliberate

wickedness of ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, and hurled at the throne of the holy and wise and gracious God, could never, by any possibility, be counterbalanced by the combined performances of the noblest and most gifted of created intelligences. Such a supposition is utterly romantic—it is preposterous—it is wild. Yet all this world of evil must be deluged, a compensation to the law must be rendered for it, by the shed blood of a sacrifice which is sufficient for its removal. The mere effort fully to estimate or understand an evil of such prodigious dimensions would manifestly far outstrain the strongest powers of the most gigantic intellect of creatures. Where, then, amidst the bewilderment of an overpowered endeavour to comprehend it, could the ability be found to accomplish its destruction? Where? Not assuredly in the great but little mind which has cast and sunk and lowered its longest plummet of thought in the mighty moral ocean, has a thousand times been baffled in its efforts to sound it, draws up in utter hopelessness its line of amazing length, and, in the weariedness and abandonment of its vain attempts, exclaims, "O the depth!" To imagine that a mind can roll away an ocean which it cannot fathom, overturn a mountain which it cannot measure, annihilate a globe which it cannot bestride, expiate sins which it can neither calculate in their number, estimate in their enormity, nor comprehend in their deserts—to imagine this would be wildness and folly in perfection. None but God can perceive the awful extent and the stupendous mass of violence which was rolled against His law by the rebellion of intelligent myriads; and none but He, connecting Himself in some mysterious manner with the requisite passable humanity, can possess an adequacy of moral worth and grandeur for rendering an atonement for it efficient.—*Rev. John Wilson.*

### III. HIS MARKED SYMPATHY WITH MAN.

[13454] Our Lord sympathized with bodily anguish. He was walking almost all His life through the wards of a vast hospital. The hospital was the world; the sick, the dying, and the mad were lying on their beds, on both sides of Him. At evening "they brought unto Him many that were sick;" and, it is written again and again, "He was moved with compassion."—*Rev. F. W. Robertson, M.A.*

[13455] An enthusiastic antiquarian, standing amidst the fragments of an ancient temple, surrounded by dust and moss, broken pillar, and defaced architrave, with magnificent projects in his mind of restoring all this to former majesty, to draw out to light from mere rubbish the ruined glories, and therefore stooping down amongst the dank ivy and the rank nettles; such was Christ amidst the wreck of human nature. He was striving to lift it out of its degradation. He was searching out in revolting places that which had fallen down, that He

might build it up again in fair proportions, a holy temple to the Lord. Therefore He laboured among the guilty; therefore He was the companion of outcasts; therefore He spoke tenderly and lovingly to those whom society counted undone; therefore He loved to bind up the bruised and the broken-hearted; therefore His breath fanned the spark which seemed dying out in the wick of the expiring taper when men thought it was too late, and that the hour of hopeless profligacy was come. It was that feature in His character, that tender, hoping, encouraging spirit of His, which the prophet Isaiah fixed upon as characteristic, "A bruised reed will He not break." It was an illustration of this spirit that He gave in the parable of the Prodigal Son.—*Ibid.*

[13456] "If misfortunes could be remedied by tears," says Muretus, "tears would be purchased with gold. Misfortune does not call for tears, but counsel." This advice, however, which is adapted at the same time to soothe and guide effectually, can originate only in a tenderly experienced soul. "Few are the hearts whence one same touch bids the sweet fountain flow;" but Christ was the chief of such, and was always ready to relieve the distressed, because from His tenderest years He had experienced their direst pangs. In every respect He was a model of moral excellence, possessing superlative worth; and this superiority consisted not a little in the fact that, considered in His human qualities, His was one of those

"Souls that carry on a blest exchange  
Of joys they meet with in their heavenly range,  
And, with a fearless confidence, make known  
The sorrows sympathy esteems its own,  
Daily desire increasing light and force  
From such communion in their pleasant course,  
Feel less their journey's roughness, and its length,  
Meet their opposers with united strength,  
And one in heart, in interest, and design,  
Give up each other in the race Divine."

—*E. L. Magoon.*

[13457] He feels with us, so that our experiences throw their waves upon the shore of His soul. He carries us so near to His heart that all our feelings, which are of any moment, reproduce their effects, in some degree, in His bosom.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[13458] Grief that creeps  
Unto Thy side for shelter, finding there  
The wound's deep cleft, forgets its moan and weeps  
Calm, quiet tears, and on Thy forehead Care  
Hath looked until its thorns, no longer bare,  
Put forth pale roses.—*Dora Greenwell.*

[13459] Men everywhere became manageable under the eye and the moulding hand of Christ, because, in addition to the native divinity of



His character, the depth and variety of His human experience enabled Him to get close to them—closely in contact with their inmost selves. He did not spin about Him an impervious web of conventional prejudices and feelings, which protected His tender soul from the touch of ordinary bystanders. The beings and vicissitudes with which He came in contact day by day and hour by hour touched the innermost and tenderest fibres of His being. He thus learned to sway the masses because He could draw them with the cords of a man. The winding passages to the human heart He had critically scanned, and all its trembling sensibilities He had felt; hence, through the outer sanctuary, into the very presence of the most hidden spirit, He could advance at once, holding the object of His mercy spellbound by His tones and the first glance of His eye, because that eye moistened with sympathy for the suffering, and there were tears in His voice which no degree of obduracy could resist.—*E. L. Magoon.*

[13460] One of the most attractive features in the character and life of Christ is this early and unbounded development of His social nature under circumstances which were apparently so adverse. He may have been neglected by others, but He neglected none. His birth was so low, and His preparatory career so obscure, that the great and influential of earth found themselves incapable of stooping to foster His worth; but He who was greater and mightier than all voluntarily assumed that position, not for the purpose of dragging any down, but for raising all up. Kings, princes, and priests; Sadducee, Pharisee, and Essene; all sects, orthodox and heterodox, may have striven equally to make their respective adherents bow and mould themselves to their own creed; but He, the lowly and loving man of the people, the Son of God, the Son of man, everywhere and in every condition, would let His mighty heart swell under a prostrate and abused race, that He might raise them above oppression, by imparting to the soul a power and a deliverance which sectarianism and tyranny can never wrest from its grasp. As Christ moved about from scene to scene where the great masses antagonized with penury and wrong, drudging through long periods of unproductive toil, that a few might riot in luxurious ease, and gathering at remote intervals a few gleams of home joy, while their oppressors wasted their whole lives in riotous delights, it is easy to see how He constantly yearned to be their Redeemer, and to make other redeemers; to spread far and wide ideas and emotions fitted to make men Divine; to undergo all privation, peril, and pain; to love where He was hated, and to die that humanity might live, in loyalty to the wisest affection and the highest truth. Hence has generation after generation been disenthralled and beautified, blessed with patriots, sages, martyrs, prophets, and apostles, men facing the dungeon, the sword, and the flame, rather than desert their allegi-

ance to the best interests of the greatest number. This this indeed God manifest in the flesh—a Deity full of justice, wisdom, and benevolence; who passed from heaven to earth, that He might raise earth to heaven; who adopted our shape and carried our sorrows, that He might comprehend us better, compassionate more benignly our infirmities, and vindicate us without defeat when tortured by the evils which in this bad world we cannot escape. It is this intense humanness of the Saviour, as well as His divinity, which gives to His religion its ineffable gentleness and irresistible power.—*Ibid.*

[13461] To the Sun of Righteousness, then, how revolting, how overwhelmingly distressing, must be the sight of an ignorant, bigoted, depraved being! But such objects never repelled the active beneficence of His hands, nor chilled the ardour of His heart. However grim and incongruous might be such a spectacle of death in life, of life in death, Christ saw in it a human reality fitted to unseal all the fountains of His most weeping Godhead. He regards the victim of lust, and fully comprehends how depraved he is. The serene light of heaven has never visited his soul; but a lurid glare, engendered of the most loathsome corruptions, has flashed on his senses, and when he takes one step more desperate than the rest, it is only when that glare adds terror to his dismal path. Nature is fierce within him, and yet he is not natural; for though the companionship to which he seems doomed has gifted him with nothing else, it has taught him ingenuity in vices. But does Christ despise this brand almost consumed? No; to His eye the most deplorable aspect of the victim is, that the very faculties which prove and constitute his identity with the Omnipotent should be employed only as the instruments of sin, and that he should be able to sink so low in the abyss of iniquity, only by the aid of those energies which were generated in the bosom of God Himself.—*Ibid.*

[13462] Jesus chose voluntarily “the low estate of the poor”—that commonest lot of honest poverty which, though it necessitates self-denial, can provide for all the necessities of a simple life. He chose the condition in which the vast majority of mankind must ever live.—*Canon Farrar.*

[13463] When did He ever go about but to do good? When did He ever open His hand but to bless? or weep, but in sympathy with human woe? What object did He ever pursue but that of benevolence? imparting life to the dying, health to the sick, pardon to the guilty, purity to the depraved, blessings to all around Him?—*Harris, 1836.*

[Perhaps we fail sufficiently to perceive the glory of the Saviour's intense sympathy because this grace has now become embodied in the life of Christianity. Indeed in pre-Christian times practical benevolence was not duly recognized as an essential element of moral excellence.]

#### IV. THE PERFECTION OF HIS CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

**1** As displayed in the incidents of His visit to Jerusalem, and the humble life at Nazareth.

[13464] The history of rising worth has nothing to compare with that temple scene. A youth appears "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers." He comes into the assembly of venerable sages with a mild and pensive countenance, that seems haunted with earnest thought. He is no favourite of earthly fortune, no scion of aristocratic pride, no pet of exclusive schools, but the simple child of the unsophisticated people, steeped to the lips in suffering; and yet, mightier than the domes that bend above Him, He is for the intellect and heart of man a glorious living temple, built with the choicest riches of unnumbered worlds. The first question He propounds startles the attention of all who hear Him, and creates the greatest astonishment in the most profound; for His words bear that charm of immaculate wisdom which can neither be defaced nor excelled. Question succeeds to question, and learning, in despair, grows more and more confused, in this, the grandest gladiatorship of mind yet witnessed on earth. Sage after sage, swelling with wounded pride, is silenced before that youth appalled in the plain attire of peasant life, radiant with the celestial light that emanates from an aspiring heart, and bent on throwing wide open the gates of instruction to all.—*E. L. Magoon.*

[13465] He stands among the rabbis, not affrighted certainly by their dignity, with no sign of bashfulness, but also with none of forwardness. He is not eager to speak. He wishes to listen. The doctors are conversing about matters which they presume are far above the comprehension of a boy. And there is in the face of this Boy nothing which tells of assumption or precocity, rather of quietness and docility. Such an one may be allowed to hear their discourse; it may impress Him hereafter, if not at once, with reverence for their persons and their office. And what was that listening of His? In the highest sense, as in every lower one, the maxim holds good, "Everything is received according to the measure of the receiver." We can imagine how glibly the familiar texts would be repeated by one and another—how often "sins" and "repentance" would be in their mouths, how they would debate about the hope of Israel and the promise of dominion over the Gentiles—how they would speak of all God's doings with them, if they did not actually pronounce the name which signified His hidden essence. What awful, unutterable meanings lay beneath these sounds! And the meaning, not the sound, was that to which this Boy was listening. That of which the learned men had

only the faintest consciousness entered into His inmost being. It was in the fullest sense listening, reverent and awful listening—the listening of a child, not the judgment of a man. It is hard for us to make that distinction, but if we believe the Incarnation we shall try to make it. We shall believe that the Child was a child, the Boy a boy; that the Child was perfect as such, and therefore did not anticipate its after-growth, which would imply imperfection; that the Boy was a perfect boy, and therefore had none of that forestalling of manhood which our consciences and reason tell us is irregular and untrue. And this is not, as some would state it, merely in order to do justice to the humanity of Christ. We cannot in any other way see how the Divinity manifested itself through the humanity, how it addressed itself to all the conditions and needs of humanity. . . . Do you suppose that those rabbis, after forty, say, or fifty years of reading and copying out the law, of comparing and registering the different commentaries upon it, had ever felt such a presence of Divinity with them as when they looked into the face of that listening Boy? They could copy the letters, they could overlook the commentaries. If there was something very deep and mysterious beneath them, they could reduce it into Cabbala; they could talk of it as their possession, their distinction from the multitude. But which of them could penetrate the awe and mystery of that countenance, clear and bright as it was? What spoke to them through that could be reduced into no Cabbala. . . . Surely those listening eyes were reading their very hearts. Surely they knew better than they ever did before that God was reading them.—*Rev. Frederick Denison Maurice.*

[13466] "He was sitting among them," it is said, "both hearing them and asking them questions." Still all is suitable to the Boy. He pronounces on nothing. He does not lay down the law on this matter or that. The time may come when He shall go up into a mountain, and open His lips, and speak as One having authority. But that time is not yet. He is not above the Scribes, but is sitting at their feet. He desires to know what they think about this commandment in the Law, about this sentence of David or Isaiah. At first, no doubt, the answers are all ready. They can tell that which one elder or another had written down, or expressed orally to His disciples. They begin to give out the oracles, perhaps with an air of patronage or condescension, to the earnest youth. Why do the patronage and the condescension disappear? Why is the well-trained memory at fault? Why is there that look of puzzle and perplexity, almost of terror, on the countenances of those who are used to resolve all riddles, to silence all disputes? The question has gone beneath commentary and text both. The second-hand answer does not avail.—*Ibid.*

[13467] We are told that "all who heard this

Child were astonished at His understandings and answers." So that they must have asked Him questions as He asked them. No doubt He showed as much willingness to submit to their catechism as He had shown eagerness to receive whatever they had to impart ; a Child, whichever task He was engaged in, taught by elder men, doing what they required. And the answers, we may be sure, like the questions, would not be new, or rare, or far-fetched. They would be startling, because they presented the words of holy men in their direct, full, original force ; because they did not make veils for them, but drew away the veil which had concealed them ; because the words came forth in them as if the men were there in whose hearts they had been as a burning fire ; because they were indeed shown to be not theirs, but His who had spoken to them, and had declared His own purpose through them. The answers, I repeat it, were not veils ; they were a revelation, or unveiling ; and that revelation or unveiling was not of a system or of a religion, but of Him who had said, "Let not the rich man glory in his riches, nor the wise man in his wisdom ; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he knoweth Me." It was, therefore, as the Evangelist expresses it, the understanding (*σύνεσις*) of this Child which astonished the doctors. No word can indicate more beautifully what must have been the impression on their minds. This Boy went along with the words which they had read and copied and committed to memory. They had never gone along with them. They had drawn conclusions from the words, generalized notions from them. But their hearts had never come into contact with them. . . . What a wonder to see them quick and breathing again in the answers of this Child ! What a wonder to find that He went along, not only with them, but with the very mind of Him from whom they had proceeded ; that He spoke like One who had been brought up with Him, like a sharer of His counsels ! Although, therefore, one discovers nothing in the listening, or questioning, or answering of this Boy which interferes with that growth in wisdom and stature of which St. Luke speaks—with that gradual unfolding of the human life which was necessary to the manifestation of the Divine life—there is that foreshadowing of after years which we generally discern in an individual man when we are acquainted with the facts of his story, and which we should confidently expect in the Man, the Representative of the race.—*Ibid.*

[13468] He begins life with a perfect youth. His childhood is an unspotted, and withal a kind of celestial flower. The notion of a super-human or celestial childhood, the most difficult of all things to be conceived, is yet successfully drawn by a few simple touches. He is announced beforehand as "that Holy Thing ;" a beautiful and powerful stroke to raise our expectation to the level of a nature so mysterious. In His childhood, everybody loves Him. Using

words of external description, He is shown growing up in favour with God and man, a child so lovely and beautiful that heaven and earth appear to smile upon Him together. So, when it is added that the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and, more than all, that the grace or beautifying power of God was upon Him, we look, as on the unfolding of a sacred flower, and seem to scent a fragrance wafted on us from other worlds. Then, at the age of twelve, He is found among the great learned men of the day, the doctors of the temple, hearing what they say, and asking them questions. And this without any word that indicates forwardness or pertness in the child's manner, such as some Christian rabbi or silly and credulous devotee would certainly have added. The doctors are not offended, as by a child too forward or wanting in modesty, they are only amazed that such a degree of understanding can dwell in one so young and simple. His mother finds Him there among them, and begins to expostulate with Him. His reply is very strange ; it must, she is sure, have some deep meaning that corresponds with His mysterious birth, and the sense He has ever given her of a something strangely peculiar in His ways ; and she goes home keeping His saying in her heart, and guessing vainly what His thought may be. Mysterious, holy secret, which this mother hides in her bosom, that her holy thing, her child whom she has watched during the twelve years of His celestial childhood, now begins to speak of being "about His Father's business," in words of dark enigma, which she cannot fathom.—*Horace Bushnell, D.D.*

[13469] Several of the first years of our Lord's temporal life were passed in almost entire obscurity, wherein He accomplished the destiny of man, eating the bread which He gained in the sweat of His brow. Submissive to every filial obligation, it is recorded that He obeyed Joseph and Mary with perfect docility ; He accomplished with them the precepts of the law, and it was thus that He grew in wisdom, in age, and in favour before God and men. As the deliverer of man condemned, the ennobler of man degraded, it was necessary that Jesus should at every step be the model of man in perfection, the source of all the graces by which we can, in following His precepts, and imitating His examples, re-establish in ourselves the image of God, which sin has defaced. No period of His progress, no incident in His life, is unworthy of our profoundest study. We should strive to penetrate the thoughts of eternal wisdom, and contemplate His ways in the marvellous work of our redemption.—*E. L. Magoon.*

[13470] Here we meet at the very threshold of the early history of Christ, that singular combination of humility and grandeur, of simplicity and sublimity, of the human and Divine, which characterizes it throughout, and distinguishes it from every other history. He is not



represented as an unnatural prodigy, anticipating the maturity of a later age, but as a truly human child, silently lying and smiling on the bosom of His virgin mother, "growing" in body and "waxing strong in spirit," and therefore subject to the law of regular development; yet differing from all other children by His supernatural conception and perfect freedom from hereditary sin and guilt. He appears in the celestial beauty of unspotted innocence, a veritable flower of paradise.—*Prof. Schaff.*

[13471] He was a child, and a child that grew in heart, in intellect, in size, in grace, in favour with God. Not a man in child's years. No hotbed precocity marked the holiest of infancies. The Son of Man grew up in the quiet valley of existence—in shadow, not in sunshine, not forced. No unnatural, stimulating culture had developed the mind or feelings; no public flattery; no sunning of His infantine perfections in the glare of the world's show, had brought the temptation of the wilderness with which His manhood grappled too early on His soul. He knew that He was childlike, as other children; for in after years His brethren thought His fame strange, and His townsmen rejected Him. They could not believe that one, who had gone in and out, ate and drank and worked among them, was He whose Name is Wonderful. The proverb, true of others, was true of Him: "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." You know Him in a picture at once by the halo round His brow. There was no glory in His real life to mark Him. He was in the world, and the world knew Him not. Gradually and gently He woke to consciousness of life and its manifold meaning; found Himself in possession of a self; by degrees opened His eyes upon this outer world, and drank in its beauty. Early He felt the lily of the field discourse to Him of the Invisible Loveliness, and the ravens tell of God His Father. Gradually and not at once He embraced the sphere of human duties, and He woke to His earthly relationships one by one—the Son—the Brother—the Citizen—the Master.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

[13472] The true view of Christ in His human development is, that He set before us the successive stages of human life in perfect purity and exemption from sin, and yet at the same time in a manner which was never out of keeping with the peculiar natural character of any period; which could not have been the case had Jesus, when a child, possessed perfect wisdom. He was thoroughly a child, thoroughly a youth, thoroughly a man; and thus He hallowed every step of human development. Nothing really out of character was ever seen in Him, as if His sayings as a child had been such as befitted ripper years.—*Dr. Olshausen.*

[13473] One of the most striking features of Christ's education was the purity, strength, and copiousness of His affections. From the aris-

toocracies of the age, in both church and state, He was isolated and contradistinguished; but to His sisters, to children, and to all spirits not dwarfed by bigotry and degraded by passion, He was ever closely allied. He first breathed on the breast of a virgin, and perpetually grew in intimate contact with the great heart of humanity, throbbing in the bosom of unsophisticated life. He came to uprear love's standard upon the battlements of truth; and He won His best preparation for the task, not in the contracted and desiccative influence of polemical warfare, but amid the expanding and ennobling tendencies which prevail where "glides the calm current of domestic joy."—*E. L. Magoun.*

[13474] The youthful days of our Saviour were full of toil, such as is common to mankind; and this toil was adapted to develop His energies for the coming strife, and enlarge His sympathies for the suffering of every class. These are the points thus far considered. We would remark that in those early scenes of bitter experience His aspirations were Divine, and doubtless urged Him with profounder ardour to break the fetters of the world. The Hebrew nations expected a Deliverer, and Micah had foretold that the promised king should be born in Bethlehem, the very place where the house of David had its origin. The Messiah appeared; but the lowly circumstances of His birth and youth were in striking contrast with His inherent dignity, and the glory it was supposed He would bring. That He should make His advent in the guise of a carpenter's son, and accustom Himself to manual toil, instead of assuming at once the splendours of worldly dominion, rendered Him, to the minions of priestly and regal power, the object of loathing and contempt. We must remember that Christ was all the while conscious of this; that, in the face of the upper and most oppressive circles, and in spite of their rage, He, from the beginning, chose to identify Himself with the lowest rank of common people, share their burdens, sympathize with their sorrows, and aspire to deliver them from all their wrongs. In the midst of the most menial pursuits He fostered the sublimest purposes of soul; in "clear dream and solemn vision" He contemplated the auspicious destinies of the human race, and, in view of what His own almighty hand should, at the proper time, perform, laboured on in patient thoughtfulness, lifting His young brow ever and anon toward heaven, to "hail the coming of time."—*Ibid.*

[13475] We need not complain that we know too little of His youth and mental development. We know enough, and what we do know of this His period of silence is, in one word, His meekness which is peculiarly striking in the picture which the few features of the historical narrative place before us.—*Luthardt.*

## 2 Homiletical remarks and applications.

[13476] We almost hear each consecrated

[13476—13479]

[CHRIST'S SINLESS LIFE AND PERFECT MERITS]

votary at the shrine of Eternal Righteousness exclaim from the depths of his soul, "Poverty may humble my lot, but it shall not debase me; temptation may shake my nature, but not the rock on which thy temple is based; misfortune may wither all the hopes that blossomed in the dewy morning of my life, but I will offer dead leaves when the flowers are no more. Though all the loved objects of earth perish, all that I have coveted fade away, I may groan under my burden, but I will never be recreant to duty, never disloyal to Thee, O my God." Such resignation, suffering supported with so much constancy, was indeed noble, as seen, for instance, in the immolation of Socrates; but how much more sublime in the youthful struggles of Jesus Christ! What is there so exalted or Divine "as a great and brave spirit working out its end through every earthly obstacle and evil; watching through the utter darkness, and steadily defying the phantoms which crowd around it; wrestling with the mighty allurements, and rejecting the fearful voice of that want which is the deadliest and surest of human tempters; nursing through all calamity the love of the species, and the warmer and closer affections of private ties; sacrificing no duty, resisting all sin; and amid every horror and every humiliation, feeding the still and bright light of that genius, which, like the lamp of the fabulist, though it may waste itself for years amidst the depths of solitude and the silence of the tomb, shall live and burn immortal and undimmed, when all around it is rottenness and decay?" But if it thrills every generous fibre of our nature to observe a fellow-creature thus toiling to be free and beneficent, what shall we think of that wonderful Being who deigned to assume humanity's woes, and struggle up from childhood through the most abject trials, that from the throne of heaven and the thrones of earth He might win the energies of almightiness to redeem mankind! It is indeed strange to see a Saviour incarnate in a manger, and, from the first developments of youth, tied with base entanglements which, through all subsequent life, are destined to grow closer and closer, till death sets the intralld Divinity free. But the sight is glorious and instructive as it is strange. It tells us that effort is the condition of growth; that He who came to be a matured and perfect Redeemer had first to perform the appropriate toils of a youthful God.—*E. L. Magoon.*

[13477] It is a very deep and beautiful and precious truth that the Eternal Son had a human and progressive childhood. Happy the child who is suffered to be and content to be what God meant it to be—a child while childhood lasts. Happy the parent who does not force artificial manners—precocious feeling—premature religion. Our age is one of stimulus and high pressure. We live, as it were, our lives out fast. Effect is everything. We require results produced at once: something to show and something that may tell. The folio of patient years is replaced by the pamphlet that

stirs men's curiosity to-day, and to-morrow is forgotten. "Plain living and high thinking are no more." The town, with its fever and its excitements, and its collision of mind with mind, has spread over the country: and there is no country, scarcely home. To men who traverse England in a few hours, and spend only a portion of the year in one place, home is becoming a vocable of past ages.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

[13478] I instance one single evidence of strength in the early years of Jesus: I find it in that calm, long waiting of thirty years before He began His work. And yet all the evils He was to redress were there, provoking indignation, crying for interference, the hollowness of social life, the misinterpretations of Scripture, the forms of worship and phraseology which had hidden moral truth, the injustice, the priestcraft, the cowardice, the hypocrisies; He had long seen them all. All those years His soul burned within Him with a Divine zeal and heavenly indignation. A mere man, a weak, emotional man of spasmodic feeling, a hot enthusiast, would have spoken out at once, and at once been crushed. The Everlasting Word incarnate bided His own time: "Mine hour is not yet come," matured His energies, condensed them by repression, and then went forth to speak and do and suffer—His hour was come. This is strength; the power of a Divine Silence; the strong will to keep force till it is wanted; the power to wait God's time. "He that believeth," said the wise prophet, "shall not make haste."—*Ibid.*

[13479] As is the case with all redeemers, His best energies were developed by the worst trials. Christ assumed our nature, bore our sorrows, fought our battles, won our triumphs. He came to this tearful and stormful earth to live out in actual experience, from the first pang to the last, the spiritual sorrows and physical deprivations of all Adam's race. Monarch supreme in heaven, and regal on earth even by right of birth, He chose to appear in the most humble condition. For our sakes He became poor, and entered upon the conquest of the world without noticing either its honours or its emoluments. In the eye of the wealthy and powerful He was regarded only as "the carpenter's son." The morning of His career dawned in the lowest vale of life, where He shared the sufferings of the most destitute, the wretched abode of cattle even, for there was no room for Him and His associates at the inn. Such was the pomp in which the Deliverer of mankind appeared. The first acts of His divinity here below were struggles against want, and His destitution increased in proportion as His functions arose. The foxes had holes, and the fowls of the air had nests; but the Son of man had no reposing place for His head. Poor and toil-worm to the end, He earned all with His own hands, or received from charity the bread He ate, the garments He wore, and the winding-sheet in



which He was entombed. Whoever has struggled with difficulties almost to strangling at the very outset of his heroic career—whoever has toiled all day to win a scanty sustenance, and, in mental desolateness and gloom deeper than night, has shrieked in agony to the God of heaven—whoever has cloaked his outward wants and inward aspirations beneath the humble mechanic's garb, and gone forth, firm, silent, and resolute, learning the "priceless wisdom from endurance drawn" among his fellow-men—whoever has mourned for "all the oppressions which are done under the sun," and been "mad for the sight of his eyes that he did see"—whoever has felt all the "wanderer in his soul," and striven through the tender years of youth with sweating brow, blistered hands, and bleeding heart, to win the weapons of moral warfare, and cleave a way to self-emancipation and the dis-inthralment of all mankind—let him come and hug to his bosom that brother of the poor and young champion of the weak; let him receive cheering words of fellow-feeling, and strength that shall never fail, from that Boy of Nazareth, the working Son of God. And in his intercourse with such an example of overcoming courage and patient efforts for the common weal, let him never despond, but remember—

"He that is born is listed; life is war—  
Eternal war with woe."

—E. L. Magoon.

[13480] He did not wait until He arrived at manhood to set a pattern of piety; He sanctified childhood too; even then He humbled Himself; even then He magnified God's law and made it honourable, and submitted to religious ordinances, and was found in the company of those eminent for learning and piety, and did not disdain parental control; and so doing He has taught children and boys and young men how they all ought to commence that solemn business of life which their heavenly Father has given them to do—how they must minister unto God in their youth, and devote to Him the firstfruits of their faculties, and attend to common duties, and hold their parents in honour—and so lay the foundation of a faith which shall not be shaken, and of a life, which Christ in His mercy will be pleased to recognize, as at least a faint resemblance of His own, when He comes in the fulness of His glory to judge the living and the dead.—Bp. Harvey Goodwin.

## V. THE PERFECTION OF HIS MANHOOD.

### I Its varied manifestations.

[13481] Mankind yearned for the advent of one in whom the love of the beautiful, the pursuit of the good, and the defence of the true, would not be a mere artistic perception, but a natural and ardent passion, such as in Christ only is realized. He best served the salvation of humanity by the peculiar education of Himself as an individual. When He had once made the beautiful, the good, and the true, an

harmonious unity for Himself, the Divine example of this unity became a more resistless argument to His sympathetic brethren than all the eloquence that man or angel could employ. He broke away from sectarian despotism, and aspired to become thoroughly and energetically individual in the purity and power of His own light, that He might excite kindred aspirations in all other individuals; and, for their encouragement, while His own person was yet sombre in the lowest vale, He poured the dawn of universal deliverance along every summit of the world. All that was needed to make Him a tender Friend, a perfect Teacher, and a mighty Redeemer, He acquired by experience on earth, and transmitted for its hope. He had the same faith in Himself as in His doctrine; and feeling that both were Divine, He was more than willing—it was His only ambition and delight—to lay them at the feet of every man. He would transform each immortal creature of our race not only into a disciple, but a prophet; placing in his heart a sublime idea, a celestial sentiment, which he should profoundly feel was destined to redeem the world. With a modest but majestic self-reliance, He shrank from no peril, no pain, no obloquy, that He might accomplish the advocacy of mercy and truth in word and deed. He went abroad, armed with no exclusiveness and no coercion, but radiant with the energies and beatitudes of a salvation designed to bless all nations, free, purify, and exalt all mankind.—E. L. Magoon.

[13482] His public life in Galilee may be described, both externally and internally, as one of exciting and exhausting activity. If we inquire, however, what was *the soul of this activity*, we shall be constrained to say that it is *the life of a Saviour* which is here depicted—a life dedicated to the poor, the sick, the forsaken, the despised—a life of devotion to the unhappy, to deliver them from the sorrows of life, and especially from depression of soul. Publicans and sinners, the mourners and the sorrowing, this is the society He seeks. To the afflicted He brings consolation, and calls the weary and heavy-laden that He may give them rest. A spirit of compassionate love and beneficent kindness animates every act of His life. . . . If ever love appeared on earth, it appeared under the form of gentleness and meekness, in Christ. But over the form of the meek Saviour of sinners is shed abroad a glory and majesty which cause us involuntarily to bow the knee before Him. Who can contemplate Him in His silent course without feeling that there is in Him a mysterious and hidden majesty, and seeing it shine forth from His every word and deed? And most of all in His deepest *humiliation*.—Luther.

[13483] Gentleness never running into weakness—tenderness never losing sight of holiness—personal endurance ever combined with protective strength, and the deepest sympathy with the sinner ever set side by side with the sternest

abhorrence of the sin. No painter ought to represent the countenance of Jesus—some have presumed to do so even upon the cross—as soft with a childish softness and delicate with a woman's delicacy; when we are speaking of Him as embodying perfection, we must be careful to remember that the perfection of a man contains in it not sympathy only, but earnestness; not love only, but (in this bad world) indignation too; and therefore we read, as one ingredient of the perfection—and read with satisfaction—looks of anger at hypocrisy, and words of scorching fire against treachery and cruelty—terrible exposures of sleek malignity, and judicial sentences upon long pretentious prayers by devourers of widows' houses.—*Dean Vaughan*.

[13484] The mental independence so prominent in Christ is a rare thing on earth, and most worthy of our esteem. We see many persons who are able to act with vigour so long as they are sustained by popular opinion; but the moment this deserts them, they fall into utter imbecility, and the wonder is, how they ever have commanded the confidence and admiration of their fellows. But such are never heroes; they belong not to the goodly fellowship of those who stoop their anointed heads as low as death, in defence of ennobling and saving truth. Christ, on the contrary, was the consummate model of the noblest cast of character; one "by its own weight made steadfast and immovable." Suffering emancipated, instructed, and consolidated His mind, as it does in every hero truly great. The burdens which Isaiah, Stephen, Paul, and Luther bore, gave steadiness to their movements and energy to their limbs.

"Thus doth strength

To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,  
Minister like a slave."—*E. L. Magoon*.

[13485] He experienced every form of favour and hate, serene confidences as well as sombre despair, and in His own destiny wrought out the destinies of all our race. Truly did He carry our sorrows and experience our griefs; and it was this practical knowledge that gave Him unlimited popular power. He addressed no peculiar or limited order of feelings, but united in His discourse all the qualities and emotions which are spontaneous in every order and condition of mankind. His audience was coextensive with humanity itself, because His experience included the experiences of all, and as His heart thrilled and responded to their own, He verified in the highest sense the saying that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin." Hence the mercifulness and wisdom of Christ's incarnation; He must assume the form, and experience the condition, of a servant, that He might bind our hearts to eternal life with the trembling fibres of His own. Even for those fledged souls who desire to soar upon the wings of devout meditation, it is well, from time to time, Antæus like, to rest upon this grosser

sphere; it was infinitely more necessary that He who came to elevate us from earth to heaven should absorb into His own person, and destroy the oppressions of our present state, that we might have both space and power to rise. This He did. He became the son and companion of the common people; was born in a town proverbially depraved; of a nation pre-eminently distinguished for superstition, national pride, bigoted self-esteem, and contempt towards all other men. He chose to arise "in an age of singular corruption, when the substance of religion had faded out from the mind of its anointed ministers, and sin had spread wide among a people turbulent, oppressed, and downtrodden; a man ridiculed for His lack of knowledge, in this nation of forms, of hypocritical priests and corrupt people, falls back on simple morality, simple religion, unites in Himself the sublimest precepts and divinest practices; thus more than realizing the dream of prophets and sages; rises free from all prejudice of His age, nation, or sect; gives free range to the spirit of God in His breast; sets aside the law, sacred and time-honoured as it was—its forms, its sacrifice, its temple, and its priests; puts away the doctors of the law, subtle, learned, irrefragable, and pours out a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and true as God. The philosophers, the poets, the prophets, the Rabbis—He rises above them all.—*Ibid*.

[13486] He is a perfectly harmless being, actuated by no destructive passions, gentle to inferiors, doing ill or injury to none. The figure of a lamb, which never was, or could be, applied to any of the great human characters, without an implication of weakness fatal to all respect, is yet, with no such effect, applied to Him. We associate weakness with innocence, and the association is so powerful, that no human writer would undertake to sketch a great character on the basis of innocence, or would even think it possible. We predicate innocence of infancy, but to be a perfectly harmless, guileless man, never doing ill even for a moment, we consider to be the same as to be a man destitute of spirit and manly force. But Christ accomplished the impossible. Appearing in all the grandeur and majesty of a superhuman manhood, He is able still to unite the impression of innocence, with no apparent diminution of His sublimity. It is, in fact, the distinctive glory of His character, that it seems to be the natural unfolding of a Divine innocence, a pure celestial childhood, amplified by growth.—*H. Bushnell, D.D.*

[13487] No one ever thus loved, nor did anything so truly good and great as the Bible tells us of Him ever enter into the heart of man. . . . A Saviour such as the Bible depicts the Lord Jesus to have been, who went about doing good, yet had Himself no place where He might lay His head; who spared no pains, and refused no shame; who humbled Himself even to death upon the cross, that He might finish His work; who came into the world to save the world;

who was therein scourged and tormented, and departed thence with a crown of thorns upon His head! Didst thou ever hear of such a thing, and do not thy hands fall down on thy lap? It is truly a mystery, and we do not understand it; but it comes from God and from heaven, for it bears the stamp of heaven, and overflows with Divine mercy. . . . It is a *holy form* rising like a star in the night upon the poor pilgrim, and satisfying his inmost craving, his most secret hopes and wishes. . . . He who can be stirred to laughter or mockery must be mad. He whose heart is in the *right place* lies in the dust, rejoices, and prays.—*Matthias Claudius*.

[13488] In the midst of the sufferings which overwhelm Him in His death, He is ever equal to Himself. The meek tranquillity with which He endures whatever wickedness chooses to inflict, and the forgiving love with which He encounters its malice, strikes us more powerfully than even in His life. . . . Throughout the whole scene there shone such a splendour of greatness and majesty that even from the heathen centurion broke forth the confession, "Truly this was the Son of God." . . . That union of meekness and majesty which sets so incomparable a stamp upon His whole demeanour, that silent power of love which makes His life a revelation of the heart of God—all are but the manifestations of that holiness which is the moral characteristic of His person and nature. None can avoid being most forcibly impressed by the holy purity of His nature. If all else be denied, this at least must be admitted.—*Lathard*.

[13489] Jesus Christ, in the discipline of His early manhood, the type of all redemption, from the most sombre depths of obscurity rose before men and angels, developing the attractiveness of infinite worth, nurtured amid trials of every sort, like a seaflower, whose roots interlace and penetrate the profoundest caverns, but whose stem mounts through unfathomed billows to the surface, and unfolds its petals to wanderers in storm and calm. His royalty began in the nakedness and gloom of the manger, was educated through a career of incessant toil, fatigues, and watchings, in which the rising Champion gathered a few palms and acclamations from the masses, between whom and Himself there was cordial love, until bigoted power interposed. But these were soon followed by the maledictions which kingcraft and priestcraft had inspired, the anguish of the garden and the tortures of the pretorium. Finally, bowed beneath the cross He bore, His brow being wreathed with a diadem of thorns, and His lips redolent of blessings on His murderers, He goes forth to expire on the mount which overlooked Tophet, that type of hell, whose powers He came to conquer and destroy.—*E. L. Magoon*.

## 2 Homiletical applications.

[13490] The whole life of Christ on earth was

tragical in the highest degree; the portions which were most obscure, not less so than the scenes on Calvary and Olivet. Think of the desolateness of that preparatory state, wherein His own kindred discarded His claims, and oppressed Him with all the chilling weight of undisguised distrust. Nothing is sublimer in the history of mind than the lonely struggles which precede and generate success. Every predestined hero will have to demonstrate his superior worth by encountering and overcoming the most undeserved obstructions. Long before an effective foothold is attained, he will have suffered most from unexpected quarters, and been more aroused by neglect than by timely aid. Misfortune is a fire that melts weak hearts, but renders the firm purer and stronger. How many of the best of our race can recognize their model and consolation in the unfriended youth of Nazareth! Let the young man compelled to struggle with that sorest destiny, relatives who foster not but rather congeal his warmest hopes, take heart from the experience of his Lord, homeless and brotherless among His own kindred, but yet on His way to the conquest of popular prejudice, the redemption of degraded humanity, and the possession of power the most comprehensive and supreme.—*Ibid*.

[13491] At an early day the great Deliverer began to look out from the centre of His own domestic circle through all the ramifications of the human race, and saw that injustice and oppression everywhere prevailed. His keen experience of this set in operation His super-human energies to defend the feeble and demolish the strong. He won a mastership over injustice even while suffering it, and through the paths of distress ascended to the highest triumphs and the best repose. Hence He exclaimed to those who would tread in His footsteps and emulate His deeds, "In the world ye will be oppressed; but be of good courage, I have conquered the world." In a manner full of light and encouragement, He has taught the champions of righteousness that it is their doom and reward to endure much that is oppressive, in order that they may the better know how to appreciate the invulnerable nature within man, which may be abused but cannot be destroyed. Providence has armed the mind with a quality which lies at the foundation of many excellences, and supports them all. This is fortitude which, by throwing a spirit of graceful endurance into every mental energy, gives beauty to grandeur, and tranquillity to zeal. Much is this quality needed, since

"In this wild world the fondest and the best  
Are the most tried, most troubled, and distressed."

In addition to the bestowal of fortitude as a prime element of the soul, there is a fact connected with its exercise which claims our gratitude. It is, that when the victim has endured his appointed suffering with unflinching heroism, and when vanquished fortune is compelled her-



self to admire, he is always the admiration of the world, as well as its greatest benefit. There is a potency in the daring heart of the resolute to which even destiny must yield. Let us remember that, as the most beautiful roses bloom in dreary Lapland, as the richest diamonds are found on the stormiest coasts, and as porphyry hardens the more it is exposed to the elements, so the best virtues of the soul are generally disciplined by the sternest trials.—*Ibid.*

## VI. THE COMPLETE HARMONY OF HIS NATURE.

[13492] If we cast a glance into the moral activities that fill up the life of Jesus, the question does not hinge on making a catalogue of virtues, and in this way proving, as by a sum in addition, His moral perfection. In this way we should not arrive at any lively idea of His moral character, nor have any guarantee for His perfection. For all virtues attain their perfection only by unity and harmonious symphony, and this exists only when they all proceed from the totality and fullness of the one principle of virtue. This unity of His virtue, by means of which all His virtues are harmoniously dovetailed, cannot, it is true, be brought into full view without the concrete and without the detail. But the main point is to view together the most distant elements which His moral character unites, and to show in the concrete that one spirit harmoniously regulates and orders all according to one great law of life.—*Dorner.*

[13493] The portrait of the Lord Jesus is one of sublimest and purest harmony, both as regards His mental and moral nature. There is disharmony in the life of every other man. Those two poles of mental life, knowledge and feeling, head and heart; those two powers of the moral life, the reason and the will—where shall we find them in unison? In the case of Jesus, on the contrary, we are vividly impressed with the feeling that perfect harmony prevails in His mental life. There is absolute peace in His inmost being. As we could not bear to conceive in Him any single mental faculty preponderating, and others consequently retiring, but are constrained to think of His intellectual parts and nature as perfectly proportioned, so it is also with His entire mental and moral life. It is a human life of perfect harmony. He is all love, all heart, all feeling; and yet again He is all mind, all mental enlightenment and sublimity. There is no schism between feeling and reason in His nature. There is, moreover, the greatest vitality of feeling and emotion, of thought and resolve, and yet this vitality of His inner nature never passes into passionate excitement; all is quiet dignity, peaceful simplicity, sublime harmony. Such is the image which the gospel narrative presents to us, and of which we are constrained to say, Such was He, such must He have been. And in such an image is reflected the moral harmony

of His nature. It is because there was in Him nothing of that moral discord which pervades the inner world of all other men that His mental and spiritual life were so harmonious, so peaceful. Jesus was in perfect harmony with Himself, because He was in perfect harmony with God.—*Luthardt.*

[13494] He was free from all one-sidedness, which constitutes the weakness as well as the strength of the most eminent men. He was not a man of one idea, nor of one virtue, towering above all the rest. The moral forces were so well tempered and moderated by each other, that none was unduly prominent, none carried to excess, none alloyed by the kindred failing. Each was checked and completed by the opposite grace. His character never lost its even balance and happy equilibrium, never needed modification or readjustment. It was thoroughly sound, and uniformly consistent from the beginning to the end. We cannot properly attribute to Him any one temperament. He was neither sanguine, like Peter, nor choleric, like Paul, nor melancholic, like John, nor phlegmatic, as James is sometimes, though incorrectly, represented to have been, but He combined the vivacity without the levity of the sanguine, the vigour without the violence of the choleric, the seriousness without the austerity of the melancholic, the calmness without the apathy of the phlegmatic temperaments. He was equally far removed from the excesses of the legalist, the pietist, the ascetic, and the enthusiast. With the strictest obedience to the law, He moved in the element of freedom; with all the fervour of the enthusiast, He was always calm, sober, and self-possessed. Notwithstanding His complete and uniform elevation above the affairs of this world, He freely mingled with society, male and female, dined with publicans and sinners, sat at the wedding feast, shed tears at the sepulchre, delighted in God's nature, admired the beauties of the lilies, and used the occupations of the husbandman for the illustration of the sublimest truths of the kingdom of heaven. His zeal never degenerated into passion or rashness, nor His constancy into obstinacy, nor His benevolence into weakness, nor His tenderness into sentimentality. His unworldliness was free from indifference and unsociability, His dignity from pride and presumption, His affability from undue familiarity, His self-denial from moroseness, His temperance from austerity. He combined childlike innocence with manly strength, all-absorbing devotion to God with untiring interest in the welfare of man, tender love to the sinner with uncompromising severity against sin, commanding dignity with winning humility, fearless courage with wise caution, unyielding firmness with sweet gentleness. He is justly compared with the lion in strength, and with the lamb in meekness. He equally possessed the wisdom of the serpent and the simplicity of the dove.—*Prof. Schaff.*

[13495] The character of our Lord was such that no one virtue had undue preponderance. Take Peter, and there is a prominent feature peculiar to himself; one quality attracts you. Take John, and there is a lovely trait in his character which at once chains you, and his other graces are unobserved. But take the life of the blessed Jesus, and it shall perplex you to discover what virtue shines with purest radiance. His character is like the lovely countenance of a classic beauty, in which every single feature is so in exact harmony with all the rest, that when you have gazed upon it, you are struck with a sense of general beauty, but you do not remark upon the flashing eye, or chiselled nose, or the coral lips: an undivided impression of harmony remains upon your mind. Such a character should each of us strive after—a mingling of perfections to make up one perfection; a combining of all the sweet spices to make up a rare perfume, such as only God's Holy Spirit itself can make, but such as God accepts wherever He discovers it.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

[13496] Christ connects the non-resisting and gentle passivities of character with the severest grandeur and majesty. . . . Observe Him, first, in what may be called the common trials of existence. For if you will put a character to the severest of all tests, see whether it can bear, without faltering, the little common ills and hindrances of life. Many a man will go to his martyrdom with a spirit of firmness and heroic composure, whom a little weariness or nervous exhaustion, some silly prejudice or capricious opposition, would, for the moment, throw into a fit of vexation or ill-nature. Great occasions rally great principles, and brace the mind to a lofty bearing, a bearing that is even above itself. But trials that make no occasion at all, leave it to show the goodness and beauty it has in its own disposition. And here precisely is the superhuman glory of Christ as a character, that He is just as perfect, exhibits just as great a spirit in little trials as in great ones. In all the history of His life we are not able to detect the faintest indication that He slips or falters. And this is the more remarkable that He is prosecuting so great a work with so great enthusiasm, counting it His meat and drink, and pouring into it all the energies of His life. For when men have great works on hand, their very enthusiasm runs to impatience. When thwarted or unreasonably hindered, their soul strikes fire against the obstacles they meet, they worry themselves at every hindrance, every disappointment, and break out in stormy and fanatical violence. But Jesus, for some reason, is just as even, just as serene, in all His petty vexations and hindrances, as if He had nothing on hand to do. A kind of sacred patience invests Him everywhere. Having no element of crude will mixed with His work, He is able, in all trial and opposition, to hold a condition of serenity above the clouds, and let them sail under Him, without ever obscuring the sun.

He is poor, and hungry, and weary, and despised, insulted by His enemies, deserted by His friends, but never disheartened, never fretted or ruffled. You see, meantime, that He is no Stoic; He visibly feels every such ill as His delicate and sensitive nature must; but He has some sacred and sovereign good present to mingle with His pains, which, as it were naturally and without any self-watching, allays them. He does not seem to rule His temper, but rather to have none; for temper, in the sense of passion, is a fury that follows the will, as the lightnings follow the disturbing forces of the winds among the clouds; and accordingly where there is no self-will to roll up the clouds and hurl them through the sky, the lightnings hold their equilibrium, and are as though they were not.—*H. Bushnell, D.D.*

[13497] Men undertake to be spiritual, and they become ascetic; or, endeavouring to hold a liberal view of the comforts and pleasures of society, they are soon buried in the world, and slaves to its fashions; or, holding a scrupulous watch to keep out every particular sin, they become legal, and fall out of liberty: or, charmed with the noble and heavenly liberty, they run to negligence and irresponsible living; so the earnest become violent, the fervent fanatical and censorious, the gentle waver, the firm turn bigots, the liberal grow lax, the benevolent ostentatious. Poor human infirmity can hold nothing steady. Where the pivot of righteousness is broken, the scales must needs slide off their balance. Indeed, it is one of the most difficult things which a cultivated Christian can attempt, only to sketch a theoretic view of character, in its true justness and proportion, so that a little more study, or a little more self-experience, will not require him to modify it. And yet the character of Christ is never modified, even by a shade of rectification. It is one and the same throughout. He makes no improvements, prunes no extravagances, returns from no eccentricities. The balance of His character is never disturbed or readjusted, and the astounding assumption on which it is based is never shaken, even by a suspicion that He falters in it.—*Ibid.*

#### VII. THE SIMPLE BEAUTY AND STRIKING POWER OF HIS TEACHING.

[13498] Wherein does the peculiar power of His teaching consist? The secret of its influence lies in no peculiar excellence of diction. Jesus was no poet, no orator, no philosopher. It is not the charm of poetry which attracts us, not the ingenious application which surprises, not flights of eloquence which carry us away; not bold speculation which evokes our astonishment; it is none of these. No one could speak with more simplicity than Jesus speaks, whether we consider the Sermon on the Mount, or His parables on the kingdom of God, or the so-called high priestly prayer. No one could speak more simply than Jesus speaks. But this is the very



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reason of His influence, that He utters the greatest and most sublime truths in the very plainest words, so that, as Pascal says, one might almost think He was Himself unconscious what truths He was propounding, unless He had expressed them with such clearness, certainty, and conviction, that we see how well He knew what He was saying. . . . We cannot fail to see that the world of eternal truth is His home, and that His thoughts have constant intercourse therewith. He speaks of God and of His relation to Him, of the supermundane world of spirits, of the future world, and of the future life of man; of the kingdom of God upon earth, of its nature and history; of the highest moral truths, and of the supreme obligations of man; in short, of all the greatest problems and deepest enigmas of life—as simply and plainly, with such an absence of mental excitement, without expatiating upon His peculiar knowledge, and even without that dwelling upon details so usual with those who have anything new to impart, as though all were quite natural and self-evident. We see that the sublimest truths are His nature. He is not merely a teacher of truth, but is Himself its source. Truth is a part of His very being. He can say, I am the Truth. And the feeling with which we listen to His words is, that we are listening to the voice of truth itself. Hence the power which these have at all times exercised over the minds of men.—*Luthardt*.

[13499] He knew the mental habits of the people to whom His preaching was addressed. He knew that in general they were not a cultivated and an intellectual people. Their conceptions were gross, and they needed a species of instruction which should make much use of their senses in so setting truth before their minds as to do them good, and He adapted His instructions to them accordingly. When He would rebuke the pride of man, and inculcate on His disciples the need of cultivating a lowly and confiding temper of heart, He does not merely deliver to them the abstract and general, though all-important truth, that man must be converted and experience a radical transformation of character, in order to their being saved; but, to impress this sentiment more strongly, He takes a little child and sets him in the midst of them, and then tells them how salvation is to be obtained: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God. Whoso receiveth not the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." When He would teach men to confide in the all-governing providence of God, and not yield to impatience, or discouragement, or unbelieving fear, He summons to His aid the objects of nature around Him, and makes the dependence of all her tribes, animate and inanimate, subservient to His design. "Consider the lilies of the field." "Consider the ravens." Who nourishes them? Who gives them their delicate clothing? Who protects them in the

storm? Who preserves them through the changing seasons? The field, untrodden by the foot of man, and uncultivated by human care, has flowers surpassing in glory the richest and wisest of earthly kings; but "they toil not, neither do they spin." Who rears and upholds these little and delicate structures? "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not clothe you, O ye of little faith?" When our Saviour would impress upon us the duty of kindness to our poor neighbour, and tell us who is our neighbour, He relates the misfortune of a Jew who "went down to Jericho and fell among thieves."—*E. L. Magoon*.

[13500] It is a remarkable and even super-human distinction of Jesus that, while He is advancing doctrines so far transcending all deductions of philosophy, and opening mysteries that defy all human powers of explication, He is yet able to set His teachings in a form of simplicity that accommodates all classes of minds. And this for the reason that He speaks directly to men's convictions themselves, without and apart from any learned and curious elaboration, such as the uncultivated cannot follow. No one of the great writers of antiquity had even propounded, as yet, a doctrine of virtue which the multitude could understand. It was taught as being τὸ καλὸν (the good), or τὸ πρέπον (the becoming), or something of that nature, as distant from all their apprehensions, and as destitute of motive power, as if it were a doctrine of mineralogy. Considered as a gift to the world at large, it was the gift of a stone, not of bread. But Jesus tells them directly, in a manner level to their understanding, what they want, what they must do and be, to inherit eternal life, and their inmost convictions answer to His words. Besides, His doctrine is not so much a doctrine as a biography, a personal power, a truth all motivity, a love walking the earth in the proximity of a mortal fellowship. He only speaks what goes forth as a feeling, and a power in His life, breathing into all hearts. To be capable of His doctrine, only requires that the hearer be a human creature wanting to know the truth. Call Him, then, who will, a man, a human teacher; what human teacher ever came down thus upon the soul of the race, as a beam of light from the skies—pure light, shining directly into the visual orb of the mind, a light for all that live, a full transparent day, in which truth bathes the spirit as an element? Others talk and speculate about truth, and those who can may follow; but Jesus is the truth, and lives it; and, if He is a mere human teacher, He is the first who was ever able to find a form for truth at all adequate to the world's uses. And yet the truths He teaches out-reach all the doctrines of all the philosophers of the world. He excels them a hundredfold more, in the scope and grandeur of His doctrine, than He does in His simplicity itself.—*H. Bushnell, D.D.*

[13501] He realized in the presence of the human race an ideal of human perfection level to popular comprehension, and within the reach of all. In His person, His demeanour, and His speech, the world saw the infinite brought down to our standard, so realized that we can easily understand it, and feel the majesty and beauty of that love to Christ which is nothing but the imitation of God brought near to the roused intellect and heart. We cannot wonder that the people were spell-bound in the presence of such a teacher. The pure and joyous effluence of truth emanating from Him must have captivated their vision, like the sun as he bathes with his beams fragrant vales and bleak mountain-tops. Christ was radiant with celestial benignity, which He transfused into the surrounding multitudes through the simplest expressions and most transparent life, fascinating the popular heart, and lifting it to a participation of immortal bliss.—*E. L. Magoon.*

[13502] The chief element of Christ's power lay in the fact that He thrilled the principle of perfectibility latent in every rational creature whom He addressed. By His own incarnation He glorified humanity, and came breathing into every recess of its bleeding and aspiring heart nothing but peace and love. He explained the possibility of our being one with God, and presented motives for our becoming grand as eternity. In this way He portrayed the soul as a treasure most precious, which the universal Father bends down with infinite solicitude to rescue, ennoble, and for ever preserve. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said He; and His incessant effort was to elevate souls, by revealing to them the gospel plan of spiritual perfection. All His labours and lessons were designed to lift up the fallen race of Adam, to remove every obstruction in the way of moral improvement, and to show how man is to be loved as God's child, a creature of immortality, a temple built for the skies. Of all teachers Christ was the best, of all reformers the wisest and most beneficent; for His thoughts were the mightiest, and He strove with divinest zeal.—*Ibid.*

[13503] Christ best knew what was in man, and He was so bent on developing and ennobling His torpid powers that gracious words and beneficent deeds were as common to Him as vital air and daily bread. If He was the wisest teacher that ever descended from heaven, it was because He habitually acted on the principle that the religious sentiment in human beings is the mightiest agent on earth. To give this a proper training, and to preserve it from a perverted use, was His constant aim. To accomplish this the more benignly, and with the widest advantage, He did not conduct His hearers through the dubious region of conflicting theories, but brought them at once into the lucid medium of absolute truth; by word and action He reached their intentions through His own deepest and most tender consciousness, without permitting

any intellectual refinements or fastidious niceties of the brain to check and chill their outpouring.—*Ibid.*

[13504] He preferred solid to popular virtues: a character which is commonly despised to a character universally extolled. He placed on our licentious vices the check in the right place, viz., upon the thoughts. He collected human duty into two well-devised rules. He repeated these rules and laid great stress upon them, and thereby fixed the sentiments of His followers. He excluded all regard to reputation in our devotion and alms; and, by parity of reason, in our other virtues. His instructions were delivered in a form calculated for impression; they were illustrated by parables, the choice and structure of which would have been admired in any composition whatever. He was free from the usual symptoms of heat and vehemence in devotion, austerity in institutions, and a wild particularity in the description of a future state. He was free also from the depravities of His age and country, without superstition among the most superstitious of men; yet not decrying positive distinctions or external observances, but soberly recalling them to the principle of their establishment, and to the place in the scale of human duties; there was nothing of sophistry or trifling, though amidst teachers remarkable for nothing so much as frivolous subtleties and quibbling expositions. He was candid and liberal in His judgment of the rest of mankind, although belonging to a people who affected a separate claim to Divine favour, and, in consequence of that opinion, prone to uncharitableness, particularity, and restriction. In His religion there was no scheme of building up a hierarchy or of ministering to the views of human governments. In a word, there was everything so grand in doctrine and delightful in manner, that the people might well exclaim, "Surely never man spake like this man!"—*Paley.*

[13505] His object was not to compel, but persuade; to gain consent where consent was wanting; to make willing what before was reluctant; to actuate the affections and woo their force; to make man say "yes," willingly and with joy, in a matter in which he was before inclined to say "no." The power He aimed at was the persuasion of creatures endowed with reason, capable of faith, and strongly affected by passion; accordingly the course He pursued was harmonious with the end He desired. The secret of His influence consisted in the nature of the religion He taught, in its depth of meaning and warmth of love, in its perfect simplicity and universal application. He expanded into innumerable forms, and diversified by infinite varieties of illustration, the great truths of human sinfulness and the infinite fulness of Divine redemption. He humbled Himself to the condition of the most humble, and poured out the greatest treasures at the feet of the most indigent, while in each act He was never formal, but

fraternal, under the guise of a servant performing the functions of a God. He knew that a delicate and close network of sensibility is diffused over the entire body of society, rendering it susceptible of being acted upon at every point; and along this He poured a tide of His own sympathy, seeking the greatest good of the greatest number, until He had drawn all segments of the great circle of humanity to one central spot, the throbbing core of His own great and benevolent heart. It was this kind of address that aroused in the common people "all the mysterious world of eye and ear," making them to hang with delight upon the lips of the Son of God, and to lean fondly towards His swelling breast. Each new principle He announced resounded in their intelligence like echoes from beyond the grave; and while they stood enthralled by the splendour of a truth then first seen, they beheld in it a glass which showed them many more—interminable vistas of glory, joys that should never end. It was Christ who first made the pulse of true religion beat in all the arteries of the common heart, and caused the people to feel that, invested with the serene and blessed atmosphere of His presence and instruction, they indeed stood in "the presence chamber of the King of kings."—*E. L. Magoon.*

[13506] He made popular impressions through preaching and practice, that was replete with love, overflowing with mercy. He was not the impersonation of reason so much as affection; He dealt not so much with the moonbeams of cold dialectics as with the brilliant sun-rays of fervid benevolence. He bent His ear to every sigh, put forth His hand to relieve every want of the distressed; and even when He had departed it was natural that His sympathetic tones should come back upon the popular heart again, thrilling even to the eye's fountain. Christ addressed Himself to the tendencies of our nature most easily awakened, whose education is the promptest, and whose results are the most enduring; to the powers of enjoyment, and He thereby won souls to happiness and peace; to the affections, and thus captivated them by love; to conscience, and caused it to respond to the instinctive voice of the moral sense; to the religious principle, and gave it the amplest means of redemption and eternal progress. In every miracle He performed on matter or on mind, it was our merciful Saviour's purpose

"To raise the human to the holy,  
To wake the spirit from the clay."  
—*Ibid.*

[13507] Can we wonder that the eyes of the Redeemer, "which seemed to love whate'er they looked upon," as they met the popular gaze, held all spirits spell-bound? Is it strange that those tones of His which everywhere proclaimed that all rational beings have an equal right to live and enjoy elicited applause from the throbbing hearts on which they fell? The common people must have been something less or more than human to have resisted the power of wisdom so

exalted, and love so impartial. He taught them to look into the everlasting mysteries of God's might, to be assimilated to infinite excellence, and thus to become Divine. He created in the common people faith, that living power which grows by the struggles it encounters, and outruns the demands made upon it by the trials of life. As Elijah, who wore a rough garment, arose to heaven with chariot and horses of fire, so Christ would encourage the humblest of earth's children to aspire after celestial treasures of the greatest worth, through a career the most resplendent and full of beneficence. Standing in the presence of such a teacher and such a friend, the people saw God manifest in the flesh, who addressed a common nature, aroused common emotions, and imparted common blessings, and whose life, as well as doctrines, proclaimed a model worthy of being not only admired, but imitated by all.—*Ibid.*

#### VIII. THE EXAMPLE OF HIS SINLESSNESS AND MERITS.

##### 1 For universal imitation and perpetual guidance.

[13508] Nothing was ever more simple and open, more obvious and easy to common imitation, than the life of our blessed Saviour, in which there was nothing dark and mysterious, abstruse and intricate; it was all perfect innocence and goodness, and He carried on one plain and intelligible and uniform design, which was to do all the good He possibly could to all men. This He pursued with all His might, with the greatest vigour and industry, with an undaunted courage and resolution, with an unwearied diligence, with a constant cheerfulness and serenity of mind; this was His meat and drink, His great business and delight, His life and His happiness; He was not superciliously morose, had no affected singularities, no peculiar austerities in habit or diet, different from the common usage of men; His conversation was kind and innocent, free and familiar, open and indifferent to all sorts of persons; for He was a Physician, and every body had need of Him, all mankind were His patients. He did not place religion (as some have done since) in retirement from the world, and shunning the conversation of men, and taking great care to do nobody good; not in profound mysteries and fine speculations, but in the plain and honest practice of the solid and substantial virtues of a good life; in meekness and humility, in kindness and charity, in contentedness in a low and mean condition, and a calm composure of mind under all accidents and events, in patience under the greatest reproaches and sufferings, and a perfect submission to the will of God in all His dispensations, how harsh and unpleasant soever. Now there is nothing in all this but what lies open to every man's understanding, and is easy to our practice and imitation, requiring nothing but an honest mind and due care and diligence to do what we may easily know; to follow our Guide in a plain way and in all the actions of our



lives ; to tread in those steps in which the Son of God, and the best man that ever was, hath gone before us.—*Abp. Tillotson, 1630-1694.*

[13509] The representation, as far as possible, by man of the life and character of Christ in his own nature, should be the mainspring of every action and the end of all endeavour. Visible to the pilgrim follower's eye must ever be that guiding sign-post along the Divine route, "This is the way, walk ye in it."—*A. M. A. W.*

[13510] If Jesus Christ recommended active benevolence, He went about doing good ; if He preached forgiveness of injuries, He prayed for His murderers ; if He inculcated self-denial, He voluntarily subjected Himself to penury, crosses, persecution, and death ; if He prescribed piety toward God, He passed days and nights in prayer ; if He enjoined resignation to the Divine will, He freely drank the cup which His Father gave to His lips. In these respects it scarcely becomes us to observe that our Lord presented a marked contrast to the example, often pernicious, always imperfect, of other teachers ; since there is almost impiety in supposing the bare possibility that He could have infringed His own laws. But we may remark that by thus practising and exemplifying them, He has rendered no small service to the great cause of virtue, since, in addition to His instructions, He has exhibited and, as it were, embodied a living pattern of that new cast and description of character, of those original and distinctive excellences, which He has prescribed to His followers.—*G. Chandle, LL.D.*

[13511] "Call upon Me," saith He, "in the day of trouble ; so will I deliver thee, and thou shalt honour Me." Nothing so well bridges the rush of anger, allays the swelling of pride, heals the wound of jealousy, curbs the flow of sensuality, quenches the flame of lust, abates the thirst of avarice, and banishes the irritation of every unseemly feeling, since, when I name Jesus, I set before myself a man meek and lowly in heart, conspicuous by all moral dignity and holiness, and One who is at the same time God Almighty to heal me by His example, and to strengthen me by His aid.—*St. Bernard.*

[13512] In the virtues of His life, when He went up and down doing good and suffering evil, He was an example fit to be proposed to the imitation of all His followers ; He was at once an example of the active and the passive virtues : but as it is the most difficult part to suffer in a right manner, to bear everything most painful and disagreeable to human nature, and neither quit our patience nor innocence ; so of this most difficult part of that righteousness which He fulfilled in the whole extent of it, He gave us the most perfect pattern in the last scene of His life, which was nothing but suffering. And to carry His example to the greatest height, He not only suffered from men, but from God—pain and shame and death from men ; desertion from God—in all teaching us how to

behave with humble filial resignation to the one, and charity and meekness to the other.—*H. Grove, 1740.*

[13513] 'Tis the example of our best friend and greatest benefactor, of Him who laid down His life for us, and sealed His love to us with His own blood, and while we were bitter enemies to Him did and suffered more for us than any man ever did for his dearest friend. How powerfully must such a pattern recommend goodness and kindness and compassion to us who have had so much comfort and advantage from them ! Had not the Son of God commiserated our case, and pitied and relieved us in our low and wretched condition, we had been extremely and for ever miserable, beyond all imagination, and past all remedy. All the kindness and compassion, all the mercy and forgiveness He would have us practise towards one another, He Himself first exercised upon us ; and surely we have a much greater obligation upon us to the practice of these virtues than He had. For He did all this for our sakes ; we do it for our own. We have a natural obligation, both in point of duty and interest ; His was voluntary, and what He took upon Himself, that He might at once be a Saviour and an Example to us. He that commands us to do good to others was our great benefactor ; He that requires us to forgive our enemies shed His own blood for the forgiveness of our sins ; while we were enemies to Him, laid down His life for us, making Himself the example of that goodness which He commands us to show to others.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

[13514] The character of our Lord is to be regarded as an example. "I have given you an example," said He, "that ye should do as I have done unto you. Learn of Me. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Thus He seeks to augment the value of His own character, regarded as an argument for the gospel, by multiplying the copies of His excellence in the lives of all His people ; He would render each of His disciples like Himself—a living demonstration for the truth. All the wealth of moral power which the wise and the good have ever possessed is summed up in Him, and infinitely augmented, and brought to bear on the hearts of His people ; that, by living as under the focus of all excellence, they might be transformed into the same image. Having turned all His infinite nature into grace, having dissolved into a fountain of healing mercy for the recovery of the world, He would now employ the hearts of His people as consecrated channels for the diffusion of its streams ; He would have their natures, like His own, changed into tenderness and love. It is true, His example can never be equalled, for it embodies infinite goodness ; but with so much the greater force does it oblige us, in our humble measure, to attempt the imitation. Having adopted our humanity, when it was only related to Him, like other natures, by creation, He is



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surely entitled to expect that we should love our own flesh, that we should seek the welfare of the nature which is essentially our own, by diffusing the greatest possible happiness among those connatural with us. Having died for the good of man, the least He is authorized to expect is, that we should live for the same benevolent object.—*J. Hanna, D.D.*

[13515] The life of our blessed Saviour is an encouraging example. It cannot but give great life to all good resolutions and endeavours, to see all that which God requires of us performed by one in our nature, by a man like ourselves. Our Saviour, indeed, had many advantages above us, being God as well as man; and His humanity being supported by the Divine nature to which it was united, being clear from all the ill effects of original sin, and from all kind of vicious and inordinate inclinations. But then it is a great encouragement to us to consider that God doth not require at our hands a perfect and unsinning obedience as the condition of our salvation and happiness, but only such an obedience to His laws as is sincere and continually aspiring after greater perfection, which is very possible to us by the grace of Christ, even in this imperfect state; that God considers our weakness, and how much we stand in need of His grace and assistance, and hath assured us that it shall not be wanting to us, if we heartily and earnestly beg it of Him; and that strength which we may have for asking is as good as if it were our own. If Christ were the Son of God, so are we in a lower degree, by grace and adoption; and if we be the sons of God, the Spirit of God dwells in us, to quicken and raise us to newness of life. And He that hath left us such an example, on purpose that we might follow it, will not surely leave us destitute of power to enable us to do so. It is a good argument to us, that He will enable us to do that in some degree in our own persons, which He Himself did for our example in our nature. An example more suitable to our weakness might seem to have had more of encouragement in it; but we are to consider that the Son of God assumed our nature, as compassed with infirmities, and liable to be tempted in all things as we are, only without sin; so that His example could not possibly have come nearer to us than it does without great disadvantage to us, without wanting that perfection which is necessary to a complete and absolute pattern. In short, the Spirit of Christ dwells in us, and the same Spirit which kept and preserved Him from all sin is equally able to mortify sin in us, and to enable us to do the will of God in such manner as He will accept to our justification.—*Abp. Tillotson, 1630-1694.*

[13516] Distinguish between a model and an example. You copy the outline of a model; you imitate the spirit of an example. Christ is our example: Christ is not our model. You might copy the life of Christ, make Him a model in every act, and yet you might be not

one whit more of a Christian than before. You might wash the feet of poor fishermen as He did, live a wandering life with nowhere to lay your head. You might go about teaching, and never use any words but His words, never express a religious truth except in Bible language, have no home and mix with publicans and harlots. Then Christ would be your model; you would have copied His life like a picture, line for line, and shadow for shadow; and yet you might not be Christlike. On the other hand, you might imitate Christ, get His Spirit, breathe the atmosphere of thought which He breathed; do not one single act which He did, but every act in His spirit; you might be rich, whereas He was poor; never teach, whereas He was teaching always; lead a life in all outward particulars the very contrast and opposite of His; and yet the spirit of His self-devotion might have saturated your whole being, and penetrated into the life of every act and the essence of every thought. Then Christ would have become your example, for we can only imitate that of which we have caught the spirit.—*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*

[13517] Notwithstanding the profound mystery which belongs to our Lord's personality, and notwithstanding the difficulty we may find in the interpretation of His words and acts, there are at least two things of which we feel quite certain. First, we feel certain that eternal moral law lies at the very heart of His holy life, and of the great salvation which He accomplished by His atoning death. And, secondly, we feel certain that His obedience to law was not only constant and undeviating, but voluntary and free. He is therefore the Pattern Man, fully realizing the Divine ideal of humanity, an unchangeable Saviour, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He is the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased; and to Him belongs, in its fullest sense, the saying of St. John, "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." The perfection of His character is the manifestation of the eternal law in the human world; and its invariability forms the ground of inductive inference in our dealing with the historical facts of His earthly life.—*P. Strutt.*

[13518] The example of the crucified Saviour is an emphatic appeal. The cross is commonly represented as humbling to the human heart. It is so to the worldly pride of the human heart; but it is also to that heart an animating, soul-thrilling, ennobling call. It speaks to all that is sacred, disinterested, self-sacrificing in humanity. I fear that we regard Christ's sacrifice for us so technically that we rob it of its vital import. It was a painful sacrifice for us, as truly as if our brother. The works of love that He requires of us, in words, are preceded and illustrated by real deeds of love, to which He gave up all His mighty powers from day to day. He bore the cross Himself that He commanded us to take up and bear after Him. Requiring us to hate

even life for the gospel's sake, He went before us in dying for the gospel; suffering a death most bitter at the hands of enemies exasperated only by His goodness, and that when, at a word, He might have called to His aid whole legions of angels, and driven them out of the world. And then He went before us in the bursting of the grave and the resurrection from it; becoming, in His own person, the first-fruits of them that slept. And, finally, He ascended, and passed within the veil before us, as our forerunner, whom we are to follow even there.—*H. Bushnell, D.D.*

[13519] Christ's Divinity does not destroy the reality of His manhood by overshadowing or absorbing it. Certainly the Divine attributes of Jesus are beyond our imitation. We can but adore a boundless intelligence or a resistless will. But the province of the imitable in the life of Jesus is not indistinctly traced: as the Friend of publicans and sinners, as the Consoler of those who suffer, and as the Helper of those who want, Jesus Christ is at home among us. We can copy Him, not merely in the outward activities of charity, but in its inward temper. We can copy the tenderness, the meekness, the patience, the courage, which shine forth from His perfect manhood. His human perfections constitute indeed a faultless ideal of beauty, which, as moral artists, we are bound to keep in view. What the true and highest model of a human life is, has been decided for us Christians by the appearance of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Others may endeavour to reopen that question; for us it is settled, and settled irrevocably.—*Canon Liddon.*

[13520] How many have prayed for their murderers now that the Pattern Man has enabled our hearts to feel what, but for His example, might have been for ever hidden in the undeveloped capacities of man's nature—that revenge is less noble than forgiveness. Thus has He set forth the perfect type of manhood, and through the example of the elder brother, the lineaments of truth may be discerned even in the corrupted nature of His brethren.—*R. J. Wilberforce.*

[13521] Imitation is an instinct in human nature, and therefore it is of the utmost importance to have a perfect model to follow. Most men who have succeeded have had some grand model before them. To be a Christ-like Christian, it is most essential to be continually studying the life and character of Christ.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes.*

## IX. EFFECTS OF THE WONDROUS LIFE OF CHRIST.

### I General and universal.

(1) *It sways the world, and influences all ages.*

[13522] The more one sinks oneself back into the secret springs of the life and work of Jesus,

to comprehend it and to sympathize with it, the more plainly does unselfishness appear to be the very breath of its being. To consider others first, to gauge their wants, to suffer with their trouble, to care for them in forgetfulness of self, and then, in the resolute endeavour after being helpful, to fling away every consideration of personal ease or benefit; to live in order to spend, toil, and give; and in such lavish spendthrift giving away of everything, even of life, for others, to find one's own true life—a blessedness like God's: this is to be Christ-like. It is like a key to all His teaching and to Himself likewise, which St. Luke has preserved for us, not in his Gospel but in the Acts, in that precious morsel of early tradition, that else unrecorded maxim of the Master, cited at Miletus by St. Paul: "It is more blessed to give than to receive!" When this Divine axiom, illuminated by the unspeakable gift of Christ Himself for a lost race, lodged itself in primitive Christian hearts, it changed the world. In this Paul followed Christ, saying, "I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the salvation of many." In this he bade the Churches follow him: "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's." The echoes of this great lesson in God-like love have gone on ringing and repeating themselves all down the Christian ages, too faint, alas! yet never dying out.—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

[13523] The effects of the work of Christ are even to the unbeliever undisputable and historical. It expelled cruelty; it curbed passion; it branded suicide; it punished and repressed an execrable infanticide; it drove the shameless impurities of heathendom into a congenial darkness. There was hardly a class whose wrongs it did not remedy. It rescued the gladiator; it freed the slave; it protected the captive; it nursed the sick; it sheltered the orphan; it elevated the woman; it shrouded as with a halo of sacred innocence the tender years of the child. In every region of life its ameliorating influence was felt. It changed pity from a vice into a virtue. It elevated poverty from a curse into a beatitude. It ennobled labour from a vulgarity into a dignity and a duty. It sanctified marriage from little more than a burdensome convention into little less than a blessed sacrament. It revealed for the first time the angelic beauty of a purity of which men had despaired, and of a meekness at which they had utterly scoffed. It created the very conception of charity, and broadened the limits of its obligation from the narrow circle of a neighbourhood to the widest horizons of the race. And while it thus evolved the idea of humanity as a common brotherhood, even where its tidings were not believed—all over the world, wherever its tidings were believed it cleansed the life and elevated the soul of each individual man. And in all lands where it has moulded the characters of its true believers, it has created hearts so pure, and lives so peaceful, and homes so sweet, that it might seem as though those angels who

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had heralded its advent had also whispered to every depressed and despairing sufferer among the sons of men, "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, that is covered with silver wings, and her feathers like gold." Others, if they can and will, may see in such a work as this no Divine Providence; they may think it philosophical enlightenment to hold that Christianity and Christendom are adequately accounted for by the idle dreams of a noble self-deceiver, and the passionate hallucinations of a recovered demoniac. We persecute them not, we denounce them not, we judge them not; but we say that, unless all life be hollow, there could have been no such miserable origin to the sole religion of the world, which holds the perfect balance between philosophy and popularity, between religion and morals, between meek submissiveness and the pride of freedom, between the ideal and the real, between the inward and the outward, between modest stillness and heroic energy, nay, between the tenderest conservatism and the boldest plans of world-wide reformation. The witness of history to Christ is a witness which has been given with irresistible cogency; and it has been so given to none but Him.—*Canon Farrar.*

[13524] The impression which the life of Jesus called forth, and the expression which He gave to His own consciousness of inward purity, do not stand isolated and alone, but are borne up and attested by the world-embracing effects which He has produced. These effects have influenced the moral and religious life of humanity in the individual and in the mass; and they are of such a character as can be comprehended only by admitting the holy purity of His person; for only by an individual of sinless holiness could they have been caused. For what are these effects? They are the complete renovation of the moral life, the assured consciousness of redemption from sin, and the implantation of the element of holiness in man, which rests upon the conviction that this holiness has in truth appeared among men as perfect love, and as close and unbroken fellowship with God.—*Ullman's Sinlessness of Jesus.*

[13525] Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Cæsar, Mahomet, and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and Divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke words of life as never were spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He has set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and sweet songs of praise, than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times. Born in a manger, and crucified as a malefactor, He now controls the destinies of the civilized world, and rules a spiritual empire which embraces one-third of the inhabitants of

the globe. There never was in this world a life so unpretending, modest, and lowly in its outward form and condition, and yet producing such extraordinary effects upon all ages, nations, and classes of men. The annals of history produce no other example of such complete and astounding success in spite of the absence of those material, social, literary, and artistic powers and influences which are indispensable to success for a mere man.—*Prof. Schaff.*

## 2 Special and individual.

(1) *It inspires the heart of man with profound, impassioned reverence, and controls his inner life.*

[13526] Some have been entirely restrained from violating the sanctuary of truth by the character of Christ, which, like the presence of a shrine, has protected it. As the house of Obededom was blessed for the sake of the residing ark, so religion has often escaped evil, and received homage from its foes, for the sake of the character of Christ. Men who have destroyed, in intention, every other part of the temple of truth, have paused when they came to this—have turned aside, and desisted for awhile, from the work of demolition, to gaze and bow before it; have not merely left it standing as a column too majestic, or an altar too holy, for human sacrilege to assail, but (it was the only redeeming act in their history) have even inscribed their names on its base, and have been heard to burst forth in admiring exclamations approaching to love.—*J. Harris, B.D.*

[13527] I strove, with faltering lips, to speak of Thee,  
To tell the power of Thy humanity,  
But oh! one upward look at that calm face  
Compelled a downward glance of self-disgrace.

Its purity appalled! its love did thrill  
My inmost being, spirit, soul, and will,  
*Felt* was that beauty I could not express  
Love in mute stricken tears of tenderness.

—*A. M. A. W.*

[13528] As long as men are men, can they ever have a higher moral conception of God than that given to them through the character of a perfect man, and can we conceive, in centuries to come, men ever getting beyond that idea as long as they are in the human state? The conception of what the ideal man is will change, as men grow more or less perfect, or as mankind is seen more or less as a vast organism; but as long as there is a trace of imperfection in us, this idea—that perfect humanity, that is, perfect Fatherhood, perfect love, perfect justice—all our imperfect goodnesses—realized in perfection, and impersonated in One Being, is *God to us*—can never fail to create religion and kindle worship.—*Rev. Stopford Brooke.*

[13529] The merits of Christ are the cause operating to righteousness; but faith the pipe turning the stream of operation upon ourselves, instilling the living waters, the vivifying principle



of rectitude or holiness, which may daily grow more and more predominant over our appetites and aversions, annul the law of our members, and bring us gradually under obedience to the law of our minds.—*Abraham Tucker.*

#### X. HOMILETICAL HINTS.

##### 1 Christ is the solace of the obscure, and the fortifier of the weak.

[13530] Most persons, like Tacitus, delight to portray the corruptions of their fellow-men, without once attempting either to reform or alleviate them. Instead of making human culture as universal as heavenly light, the influence of redemption coextensive with the disasters of the fall, the selfish would forbid the sun to shine beyond the boundaries of their own useless domain, and concentrate their intrinsic meanness to the violent enforcement only of their own bigoted creed. If pure and promising talents start up in humble shades, like rosebuds peeping out of snow, these trampers on the best hopes of mankind will stamp down their first unfoldings, or leave them to freeze beyond all power of further growth. But not so would Christ have us deal with those who are in danger of abiding in a perpetual Cimmerian sojourn; He directs each struggling plant of humanity to be brought out into a genial, salubrious air, not mutilated by tyranny nor chilled by neglect. Each congealed sensibility would the Saviour gently loosen with the soft breath of love, and each incipient faculty would He energize with power undying, that He might transform the most hidden heart into a perennial fountain, "flinging its bright, fresh feelings up to the skies it loves and strives to reach."—*E. L. Magoon.*

[13531] The labour of reflection is best facilitated by internal quietude; and hence there have been so few really great minds, because it is rare that we meet with those who are eminently pure of heart. It is only the taught and sanctified of God who can penetrate the meaning of the celebrated oracle of Delphi, "Know thyself;" and they who at the foot of the cross most feel their weakness, will be most filled with power. Thus from our feebleness, experienced and bemoaned, grace educes and confirms the greatest strength; as from the acorn, driven before the wind to root itself in genial soil, springs an oak which the mightiest storm can scarcely bend.—*Ibid.*

##### 2 Christ is the deliverer of the oppressed, the rewarder of the sacrificed, and the patron of the aspiring.

[13532] Said Bolingbroke, "Liberty is to the collective body what health is to every individual body. Without health, no pleasure can be tasted by man; without liberty, no happiness can be enjoyed by society." But this spirit of freedom, which is so essential to the promotion of personal worth and social progress, is often destroyed or sorely crippled by those who un-

generously strive to dim its light in the souls of their fellow-men. Were it not that, to defend and perpetuate the best interests of humanity, God raises up, in every rank and age, heroes who feel great truths and dare to tell them, and whose words seem winged with angels' wings, purifying the air they winnow, and scattering light and strength in all their flight, we should indeed fear that tyranny at last, by some fearful combination of nefarious powers, might succeed in blotting the bannered constellations from Freedom's skies. Of such a result, however, there is little occasion for fear, since we know—

"That there are spirit-rulers of all worlds,  
Which fraternize with earth, and, though unknown,  
Hold in the shining voices of the stars  
Communion on high, ever and everywhere."

We do not believe that man on earth is doomed to perpetual slavery in any form. Christianity plants in the heart a sublime idea, a celestial sentiment, potent enough to redeem every individual and bless the world. It makes its recipients not disciples merely, but prophets to teach and redeemers to rescue from bondage all their fellow-sufferers. It sends them forth completely armed with an invulnerable panoply, commissioned to avoid no peril and shrink from no pain which the advocacy in word or action may require. They encompass the earth, fortified with the energies and exhilarated with the beatitudes of heaven, that they may elevate the remotest victim of oppression, and make all nations a band of brethren joined.—*Ibid.*

[13533] Sacrifice exacted by integrity is always its own exalted reward, since He whose life is consecrated to suffering for others must necessarily be a participant of the universal felicity which the Deity diffuses, infinitely more than he whose life is a mere pursuit of sensual pleasure. The existence and deeds of such men are bright revelations of omnipotent benevolence and power. This is, in some degree, true of all disciples, but more especially does it apply to the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, who have bravely consecrated their energies to the service of their race. Truly do they resemble God manifest in the flesh. Their example in time is the brightest and their preparation for eternity is the best; for we hold that in the day of final reckoning, the Judge will not so much inquire, What was your belief? as, What was your conduct on earth? What hast thou done? Where are the proofs that thou hast fulfilled a beneficent mission with all thy might? It will then be seen that all who in every age boldly wore a martyr's crown of thorns, in order that truth and righteousness might acquire comprehensive, pervading, and ennobling sway, thereby won the brightest honours and were destined to the highest thrones.—*Ibid.*

[13534] The frigid multitude without forces us to be hypocrites, when we have the strongest disposition to be sincere in the best pursuit, and



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to assume a supineness and meagreness which ill correspond to the height, and depth, and lavish variety, of the inner man, in its spontaneous efforts to expand and soar. But Jesus most acutely experienced "the reachings of our souls," and made provision for their freest and widest flight. Impelled by divinest aspirations, He would have us mount to the starry gates of God's dwelling in the skies, and drink into our panting souls, with unutterable ravishment, broad and clear beamings of His mysterious splendour, and then, in our generous warmth, He would have us hasten to distribute among our brethren the glad and sanctifying beams with which we are imbued. If they spurn our gift, depreciate its value, deny even its existence, and question our capacity to attain views so blissful, He would not have us chilled into despair by the captiousness we incur, but hold on our way in patient effort, till Omnipotence comes to crown with success our beneficent design.—*Ibid.*

[13535] Christ was the divinest of theologians, because He taught not in abstraction, but exemplification; not in dogmas merely, but deeds; in the ardour of His heart, as well as the energy of His mind; in the gentleness of His demeanour and the beneficent industry of His life. The love of the beautiful, the good, and the true were a trinity in His soul, never mutilated, smothered, or divorced. From the earliest youth He so deepened and refined the sentiment of the beautiful, that He could not be otherwise than good; and He so deepened and refined the sentiment of the good, that it was impossible for Him to be otherwise than true. He chose this order and condition of development here below, that He might prepare for earth that which earth most needs—men and women in whom the beautiful, the good, and the true, may be one, harmonious, and Divine, causing their hearts instinctively to soar toward heaven whenever they behold the flowers of the field, the stars in the firmament, and, with purer vision still, gaze on angels round the eternal throne.—*Ibid.*

[13536] The great and truly Divine idea of radically curing all the evil with which humanity is afflicted, of planting institutions which should be equally advantageous to individuals of every rank and communities of every clime, thus raising up for the Creator a better generation on the most beneficent plan, originated entirely with Jesus Christ. No mind before His ever conceived the purpose of establishing a kingdom of God, ruled only by truth, morality, and mutual joy, into which should be gathered all the nations of the earth. All this, too, was to be done without the use of any arbitrary force, merely by the gentle influence of convincing

instruction, ordinances adapted to arouse the moral sensibilities, stimulate each individual to reflect upon his most important concerns, and warm his heart with fervid aspirations after the highest good. Christ would have man feel, even the humblest of our race, that he is endowed with a nature far exalted above the brutes, a soul infinitely superior to his body, and that he is capable of knowledge, goodness, and friendship of the highest order—intercourse the most delightful with heaven. The faintest intellectual nature that gleams far down the vale of life admits of endless improvement, and He cheerfully bestows resources that will promote growth far beyond mortal existence and the decay of unnumbered worlds. Lifting an aspiring eye to the loftiest pinnacles of finite attainment, the youth who leans on Christ and follows His directions, soars rapturously in eternal approximation to the infinite excellence he was made to know. Fostered by such patronage, in view of such attainments, the obscurest and weakest aspirant bravely exclaims—

"Rouse thee, heart!  
Bow of my life, thou yet art full of spring;  
My quiver still hath many purposes."

—*Ibid.*

[13537] All youth are dead for the present life who do not hope for the future, and aspire to shine in beneficent goodness as they soar to attain eternal rewards. They are unworthy of being the companions of the exalted, and the recipients of bliss without alloy, so long as they do not elevate themselves to a level with the objects they revere, and nourish in their bosoms feelings kindred to the purest truth and divinest good. These objects of the highest reverence, and this fountain of the noblest desires, it is the prerogative of Christianity to create in the mind and heart of the most ignoble in the world's estimation, invigorate with the best supplies in the most exhausting race, and crown with the highest honours at the ultimate goal. Therefore, however cold and constant may be the selfishness of earth towards the youthful aspirant in his purest and most needy days, he never should yield to despondency—

"While the voice  
Of truth and virtue, up the steep ascent  
Of nature, calls him to his high reward,  
The applauding smile of heaven."—*Ibid.*

[13538] "My burden is light," said the blessed Redeemer. A light burden, indeed, which carries him that bears it. I have looked through all nature for a resemblance to this, and I seem to find a shadow of it in the wings of a bird, which are indeed borne by the creature and yet support her flight toward heaven.—*St. Bernard*, 1091–1153.

## PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN  
GOD AND MAN*(Continued).*DIVISION D. *(Continued.)*

## [3] Christ's Vicarious Suffering and Death.

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# RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(Continued).

## DIVISION D. (Continued.)

### 3

#### CHRIST'S VICARIOUS SUFFERING AND DEATH.

##### I. THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

###### 1 Its revelations.

(1) *Of the true character of Christ's sufferings.*

[13539] It is very certain that Christ's agony in the garden could not have arisen from bodily suffering, for He was at this time entirely free from it. He does not indeed complain of bodily, but mental suffering, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Nor can it with truth be said that His agony of mind arose from the apprehension of the physical suffering He was to endure on the cross. It would give us a very poor idea of His character, and of His strength of mind, to suppose that the fear of death, in any form, could so unnerve, so unman Him. He was not the first to suffer on a cross, nor was He to be the last.—*Rev. A. L. R. Foote.*

[13540] Whence, I ask, this agony of His? It cannot be the agony of parting from the world, for the "world was not His friend, nor the world's law." It cannot be the agony of evil passions, for His heart is full of all that is pure and tender. It cannot be the fear of the consequences of death, for He came forth from God, and He returns to God. Oh! perceive you not that His must have been an agony all His own; an agony in which no one can ever share; an agony as unparalleled in its nature as it was unparalleled in its intensity. Is it not plain that all the causes of grief known to humanity combined will not account for agony like His? What can account for it but this? He bare the wrath of God due to us sinners. Our sins brought this upon Him, pressed the bloody sweat from His frame, forced from Him the strong cries and tears.—*Ibid.*

(2) *Of the inconceivable guilt of sin.*

[13541] Oh! let us never think sin a small matter. Let us never speak of "little sins." The least of our sins cost Jesus a pang. When we begin to lose our impression of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," let us repair to Gethse-

mane's garden, and there witness a scene that will open up all the fountains of penitence in the heart. We shall say, Blessed Saviour! did my sins cost Thee all this? did my sins make Thee exceeding sorrowful? cause Thee sweat great drops of blood? awaken such an agony in Thy soul? I mourn the sins that thus grieved Thee; I hate them; I loathe them; I cast them from me. Never, never again shall that be sweet to my taste which was so bitter to Thee. This, this it is that produces that thorough alienation of heart from sin which constitutes true repentance. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."—*Ibid.*

(3) *Of the greatness of Divine love.*

[13542] How unspeakably great must have been the love of the Father, who, rather than that sinners should not be saved, laid such a weight of suffering upon His Son; and how unspeakably great the love of the Son, who, rather than that sinners should not be saved, consented to bear that load! True, He prayed that if it were possible the cup might pass away from Him. But this did not show any failing in His allegiance to His Father, or any failing in His love for sinners. *If it be possible*, says He; that is, if the salvation of sinners can be accomplished by My exemption from suffering, let this cup pass from Me. But the Father says, No, it is not possible. My justice demands this; the sinner cannot escape without an adequate atonement; the sinner must die, or Thou must; the sinner must drink the cup, or Thou must. And the Son says, Be it so, Father! I will drink it. I will go through with this trial. The case of sinners is hopeless if I fail—on Me, on Me let the vials of Thy wrath be poured forth that the sinner may escape.—*Ibid.*

(4) *Of the duty and blessedness of perfect submission to the will of God.*

[13543] The will of Christ moved in perfect harmony with the Divine will; but, alas! ours is a fallen and corrupt will; and it is hard for

us to say, in reference to any affliction, "Thy will be done." Yet the will of God must decide the matter whether we will or not: how much better is it, then, to fall willingly in with the arrangements of a sovereign God! When, therefore, He puts a cup of affliction into our hands we must desire and pray for its removal, only "if it be possible;" that is, consistent with the glory of God and with our own real good. If it is possible in this sense, He will remove it. If it is not, He will not remove it. Would we really wish Him to do so? Ah! we cannot trust our own hearts; sometimes, perchance, we would; but in our calmer moments we cannot but feel and acknowledge that God's will is better than ours—that He is a better judge than we can be of what is required for our spiritual improvement. Oh! it is a most merciful limitation that is attached to prayer, that it shall be heard and answered only if it be consistent with the will of our heavenly Father. It were a most dangerous power, and one therefore with which it were not safe we should be entrusted, that our own will were to be the measure of our success in prayer. We would certainly use such an influence to our hurt.—*Ibid.*

(5) *Of the sustaining power of prayer.*

[13544] Though Christ's prayer was not heard for the removal of the cup, it was not unheard and unanswered. It was, doubtless, in answer to it that an "angel was sent from heaven to strengthen Him." Believing prayer is always heard and answered, if not according to our plan, yet always in the way most conducive to our real good. Let thy refuge be a throne of grace. Plead with Him, and He will put strength into thee.—*Ibid.*

## II. THE SHAME OF THE CROSS.

### 1 As the badge of infamy and sign of disgrace.

[13545] The cross was regarded with a loathing and abhorrence more intense than that in which the felon's gibbet is held to-day. Its very name was an abomination to Roman ears, and it was denounced by the prince of Roman orators as a most foul and brutal punishment, an infamous and unhappy tree. Hence this Christian emblem became the object of scoffing and derision by the persecuting heathen. An illustration of this is seen in the blasphemous caricature of the Crucifixion, found upon the walls of the palace of the Cæsars, and attributed to the time of Septimus Severus. It represents a figure with an ass's head attached to a cross, which another figure, standing near, salutes by kissing the hand, or adores in the classical sense of the word. Beneath is a rude scrawl, which has been interpreted thus: "Alexomenos worships his god;" probably the sneer of some Roman legionary at a Christian soldier of Cæsar's household. Lucian also contemptuously speaks of our Lord as a "crucified impostor."—*Anon.*

[13546] This manner of suffering was most vile and shameful, being proper to the basest condition of the worst men, and unworthy of a free man, however nocent and guilty. It was *servile supplicium*, a punishment never by the Romans, under whose law our Lord suffered, legally inflicted upon free men, but upon slaves only; that is, upon people scarcely regarded as men, having in a sort forfeited or lost themselves. And among the Jews that execution which most approached thereto, and in part agreed with it (for their law did not allow any so inhumane punishment), hanging up the dead bodies of some that had been put to death, was held most infamous and execrable; for "Cursed," said the law, "is every one that hangeth upon a tree;" cursed, that is, devoted to reproach and malediction: "accursed by God," saith the Hebrew, that is, seeming to be rejected by God, and by His special order exposed to affliction.—*I. Barrow, D.D.*

[13547] The death of Socrates, peacefully philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus, expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared.—*Kousseau.*

## III. THE GLORY OF THE CROSS.

### 1 Christ's glory in the cross.

#### (1) *As the instrument of His triumph.*

[13548] Strange that at such a moment when there rose up before Christ all the vision of the shame and the suffering, the pain and the death, and the mysterious sense of abandonment which was worse than them all, He should seem to stretch out His hands, to bring the cross nearer to Himself; and that His soul should fill with triumph.—*Rev. Alex. Maclaren, D.D.*

[13549] There is a double aspect under which our Lord regarded His sufferings. On the one hand we mark in Him an unmistakable shrinking from the cross, the innocent shrinking of His manhood expressed in such words as, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished;" and in such incidents as the agony in Gethsemane. And yet side by side with that, not overcome by it, but not overcoming it, there is the opposite feeling, the reaching out almost with eagerness to bring the cross nearer to Himself. These two lie side by side in His heart; like the pellucid waters of the Rhine and the turbid stream of the Moselle, that flow side by side over a long space, neither of them blending discernibly with the other, so the shrinking and the desire were cotemporaneous in Christ's mind. Here we have the triumphant anticipation rising to the surface and conquering for a time the shrinking.—*Ibid.*

[13550] Why did Christ think of His cross as a glorifying? The New Testament generally represents it as the very lowest point of His



[13550-13557]

[CHRIST'S VICARIOUS SUFFERING AND DEATH.]

degradation ; John's Gospel always represents it as the very highest point of His glory. And the two things are both true ; just as the zenith of our sky is the nadir of the sky for those on the other side of the world. The same fact which in one aspect sounds the very lowest depth of Christ's humiliation, in another aspect is the very highest culminating point of His glory.—*Ibid.*

(2) *As the revelation of His heart.*

[13551] For Him to be known was to be glorified. So pure and perfect was He that revelation of His character and glorification of Himself were one and the same thing. Because His cross reveals to the world for all time, and for eternity too, a love which shrinks from no sacrifices, a love which is capable of the most entire abandonment, a love which is diffused over the whole surface of humanity and through all the ages, a love which comes laden with the richest and the highest gifts, even the turning of selfish and sinful hearts into its own pure and perfect likeness, therefore does He say, in contemplation of that cross which was to reveal Him for what He was to the world, and to bring His love to every one of us, "Now is the Son of Man glorified."—*Ibid.*

[13552] We can fancy a mother, in the anticipation of shame, and ignominy, and suffering, and sorrow, and death which she encounters for the sake of some prodigal child, forgetting all the ignominy, and the shame, and the sorrow, and the suffering, and the death, because all these are absorbed in the one thought : "If I bear them, my poor, wandering, rebellious child will know at last how much I loved him." So Christ yearns to impart the knowledge of Himself to us because by that knowledge we may be won to His love and service, and hence, when He looks forward to the agony and contumely and sorrow of the close, every other thought is swallowed up in this one : "They shall be the means by which the world will find out how deep My heart of love to it was."—*Ibid.*

[13553] This it is that gives a majesty so pure and touching to the historic figure of Christ ; self-abandonment to God, uttermost surrender, without reserve or stipulation, to the guidance of the Holy Spirit from the Soul of souls ; pause in no darkness, hesitation in no perplexity, recoil in no extremity of anguish ; but a gentle unflinching hold of the invisible Hand, of the Only Holy and All Good—these are the features that have made Jesus of Nazareth the dearest and most sacred image to the heart of so many ages.—*James Martineau.*

(3) *As the throne of His power.*

[13554] If His death is His glorifying it must be because in that death something is done which was not completed by the life, however fair ; by the words, however wise and tender ; by the works of power, however restorative and healing. Here is something more than these present. What more ? This more, that His

cross is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He is glorified therein, not as a Socrates might be glorified by his calm and noble death ; not because nothing in His life became Him better than the leaving of it ; not because the page that tells the story of His passion is turned to by us as the tenderest and most sacred in the world's records, but because in that death He wrestled with and overcame our foes, and because, like the Jewish hero of old, dying, He pulled down the house which our tyrants had built, and overwhelmed them in its ruins. "Now is the Son of Man glorified."—*Rev. Alex. Mac-laren, D.D.*

[13555] There blend in that last act of our Lord's—for His death was His act—in strange fashion, the two contradictory ideas of glory and shame ; like some sky, all full of dark thunder-clouds, and yet between them the brightest blue and the blazing sunshine. In the cross Death crowns Him the Prince of Life, and His cross is His throne. All His life long He was the Light of the World, but the very noontide hour of His glory was that hour when the shadow of eclipse lay over all the land, and He hung on the cross dying in the dark. At His eventide "it was light" ; and "He endured the cross, despising the shame" ; and lo ! the shame flashed up into the very brightness of glory, and the very ignominy and the suffering were the jewels of His crown. "Now is the Son of Man glorified."—*Ibid.*

[13556] The cross is "the central truth and glory" in heaven. The great burden of "the new song" is the redemption achieved through the blood of the Lamb ; and when the angels join their voices to swell the volume of the mighty anthem, they found their ascription of "power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing," upon the fact that He was slain.—*Prof. Watts.*

2 God's glory in the cross.

(1) *As presenting a matchless combination of His attributes.*

[13557] We see there the love of God desiring a way by which He might save mankind, aided by His wisdom, so that a plan is perfected by which the deed can be done without violation of truth and justice. In the cross we see a strange conjunction of what once appeared to be two opposite qualities—justice and mercy. We see how God is supremely just ; as just as if He had no mercy, and yet infinitely merciful in the gift of His Son. Mercy and justice, in fact, become counsel upon the same side, and irresistibly plead for the acquittal of the believing sinner. We can never tell which of the attributes of God shines most glorious in the sacrifice of Christ ; they each one find a glorious high throne in the person and work of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Since it has become, as it were, the disc which reflects the character and perfections of God, it is meet that we should glory in the cross of

Christ, and none shall stay us of our boasting.—*Spurgeon*.

[13558] Whatever may be the mysteries of life and death, there is one mystery which the cross of Christ reveals to us, and that is the infinite and absolute goodness of God. Let all the rest remain a mystery so long as the mystery of the cross of Christ gives us faith for all the rest.—*Charles Kingsley*.

### 3 Man's glory in the cross.

(1) *Man sees in the sacrifice of Christ the means of sanctification and the hope of eternal life.*

[13559] In His cross were Divine holiness and vindictive justice exercised and manifested, and through His triumph grace and mercy are exerted to the utmost. This is that glory which ravisheth the hearts and satiates the souls of them that believe. In due apprehension hereof let my soul live, in the faith hereof let me die, and let present admiration of this glory make way for the eternal enjoyment of it in its beauty and fulness (Heb. x. 12; Col. i. 20; Eph. iii. 18; Rom. xi. 33).—*Dr. Owen*.

[13560] The cross is not in our view simply a testimony of the Father's love, like the flowers under our feet, and the starry heavens above our heads; but the altar of the great sacrifice which restores man to God and God to man.—*Pressensé*.

[13561] In the cross is found health, in the cross life, in the cross a protection from our enemies, in the cross an infusion of the sweets of heaven, in the cross strength of soul, in the cross the joy of the spirit, in the cross the sum of virtue, in the cross the perfection of holiness. There is no salvation of the soul, nor hope of eternal life, but in the cross.—*Thomas A Kempis*.

## IV. THE MEASUREMENTS OF THE CROSS.

### 1 Its estimate of breadth, length, height, and depth.

[13562] What is the breadth of Christ's cross? It is as broad as the whole world; for He died for the whole world, as it is written, "He is a propitiation, not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world." And that is the breadth of Christ's cross. And what is the length of Christ's cross? The length thereof, says an old Father, signifies the time during which its virtue will last. How long, then, is the cross of Christ? Long enough to last through all time. As long as there is a sinner to be saved—as long as there is ignorance, sorrow, pain, death, or anything else which is contrary to God and hurtful to man in the universe of God—so long will Christ's cross last. And that is the length of the cross of Christ. And how high is Christ's cross? As high as the highest heaven, and the throne of God, and the bosom of the Father—that bosom out of which,

too, can proceed all created things. Ay, as high as the highest heaven; for if you will receive it, when Christ hung upon the cross, heaven came down on earth, and earth ascended into heaven.—*Charles Kingsley*.

[13563] Christ never showed forth His Father's glory so perfectly as when, hanging upon the cross, He cried in His death-agony, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." These words showed the true height of the cross, and caused St. John to know that his vision was true and no dream, when he saw afterwards, in the midst of the throne of God, a Lamb as it had been slain. And that is the height of the cross of Christ. And how deep is the cross of Christ? This is a great mystery, and one which people in these days are afraid to look at, and darken it of their own will, because they will neither believe their Bibles nor the voice of their own hearts. But if the cross of Christ be as high as heaven, then it seems to me it must be also as deep as hell—deep enough to reach the deepest sinner, in the deepest pit to which he may fall. I believe that we shall find St. Paul's words true, when he says that Christ's love passes knowledge; and, therefore, that we shall find this also, that however broad we may think Christ's cross, it is broader still; however high it is, higher still; however long it is, longer still; however deep it is, deeper still.—*Ibid.*

### 2 Its estimate of demand and supply.

[13564] It is a great joy to think that in the cross of Christ we have the true measure by which to estimate both the evil of sin and the fulness of its forgiveness. Down to the very depth of our fall, far beyond the range of our conscious experience, Christ has met the evil and has conquered it. And if our consciousness were to grow, in fineness of spiritual perception, to such an extent as to enable us to see sin as God sees it, still our experience could never go beyond Christ's saving power. "His blood cleanseth us from all sin," and not from those sins only which we have learnt already to feel and confess. The possibilities of conviction do not exceed the efficacy of His sacrifice.—*P. Strutt*.

### 3 Its estimate of the world's standard.

[13565] It is the death of the Eternal Word of God made flesh which is our great lesson how to think and how to speak of this world. His cross has put its due value upon everything which we see, upon all fortunes, all advantages, all ranks, all dignities, all pleasures; upon the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It has set a price upon the excitements, the rivalries, the hopes, the fears, the desires, the efforts, the triumphs of mortal man. It has given a meaning to the various, shifting course, the trials, the temptations, the sufferings of his earthly state. It has brought together and made consistent all that seemed discordant and aimless. It has taught us how to live, how to use this world, what to expect,

what to desire, what to hope. It is the tone into which all the strains of this world's music are ultimately to be resolved.—*Rev. John Henry Newman, D.D.*

[13566] Look around, and see what the world presents of high and low. Go to the court of princes. See the treasure and skill of all nations brought together to honour a child of man. Observe the prostration of the many before the few. Consider the form and ceremonial, the pomp, the state, the circumstance, and the vain-glory. Do you wish to know the worth of it all? Look at the cross of Christ.—*Ibid.*

[13567] Go to the political word. See nation jealous of nation, trade rivalling trade, armies and fleets matched against each other. Survey the various ranks of the community, its parties and their contests, the strivings of the ambitious, the intrigues of the crafty. What is the end of all this turmoil? The grave. What is the measure? The cross.—*Ibid.*

[13568] Go to the world of intellect and science. Consider the wonderful discoveries which the human mind is making, the variety of arts to which its discoveries give rise, the all but miracles by which it shows its power; and next, the pride and confidence of reason, and the absorbing devotion of thought to transitory objects which is the consequence. Would you form a right judgment of all this? Look at the cross.—*Ibid.*

[13569] Again, look at misery, look at poverty and destitution, look at oppression and captivity; go where food is scanty and lodging unhealthy. Consider pain and suffering, diseases long or violent, all that is frightful and revolting. Would you know how to rate all these? Gaze upon the cross.—*Ibid.*

[13570] Thus in the cross, and Him who hung upon it, all things meet, all things subserve it, all things need it. It is their centre and their interpretation; for He was lifted up upon it that He might draw all men and all things unto Him.—*Ibid.*

[13571] Count the whole world, in comparison with the cross of Christ, one great impertinence.—*Abp. Leighton.*

## V. THE POWER AND INFLUENCE OF THE CROSS.

[13572] What a mysterious symbol! the instrument of the punishment of the Man-God. His disciples were armed with it. "The Christ—the God," they said, "has died for the salvation of men." What a strife, what a tempest these simple words have raised around the humble standard of the sufferings of the Man-God! On the one side we see rage and all the furies of hatred and violence; on the other, there is gentleness, moral courage, infinite resignation. For three hundred years spirit struggled

against the brutality of sense, the conscience against despotism, the soul against the body, virtue against all the vices. The blood of Christians flowed in torrents. They died kissing the hand that slew them. The soul alone protested while the body surrendered itself to all tortures. Everywhere Christians fell, and everywhere they triumphed!—*Napoleon I.*

[13573] Wherever the cross has been wanting, Christianity has appeared shorn of its strength, an ineffective, lifeless, cold system. Wherever this has been lifted up, even though often associated with egregious human weakness and with serious human errors, it has proved an all but resistless power. The most expressive symbol, the most direct medium, and the chief fountain of the saving energy of Christianity, is the cross.—*Young.*

[13574] The superstition of men has too often converted the cross into a barren fetish; so that, instead of being the very mightiest instrument in promoting the world's salvation, it has, in such cases, become powerless for any effective operation upon human character. An exuberant sentimentalism has made it an object of superstition. Faith is, under such circumstances, the only safeguard against credulity. Faith gives us courage to sacrifice our fond imaginations to reality. It is the Christ of God alone who can save the world, and it is the very nature of faith to accept the limitations of truth, in order that Christ may carry out His saving work.—*P. Strutt.*

## VI. THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS.

[13575] "The preaching of the cross" is the only kind of preaching that will be attended with success. That which has in it much respecting the Divine mission, the dignity, the works, the doctrines, the person, and the atonement of Christ, will be successful. So it was in the time of the apostles; so it was in the Reformation; so it was in the Moravian missions; so it has been in all revivals of religion. There is a power about that kind of preaching which philosophy and human reason have not. "Christ is God's great ordinance" for the salvation of the world; and we meet the crimes and alleviate the woes of the world just in proportion as we hold the cross up as appointed to overcome the one, and to pour the balm of consolation into the other.—*A. Barnes.*

[13576] On mere human computation, the preaching of the cross is, of all engines, the least likely to effect a moral revolution among men. It would have been easy for Mahomet to predict that, by the processes which should be employed for the promulgation of his doctrines, multitudes of adherents would be gathered to his standard. When the sword was to hew down the refractory, and the faithful were promised a paradise in which the wine-cup should sparkle and the cheek of beauty smile, it required no vast shrewdness to calculate that



the pretensions of the false prophet were likely to be favourably received. Give man a religion which flatters his pride, or which panders to his passions, and you will not be long in surrounding yourself with votaries. But you should carefully observe how little there is in the doctrine of the cross which could seem to adapt it for making way on earth. That all dependence is to be placed on the merits of a crucified Redeemer; that His death is to be our life; His blood-shedding the sole procuring cause of the forgiveness of sin—these, the glorious and fundamental truths of the gospel, are practically the great stumbling-blocks to its reception.—*Canon Melvill.*

[13577] This is the preaching that the Holy Ghost delights to bless. He loves to honour those who honour the cross. Give me the cross of Christ; for this is the only lever which has ever turned the world upside down hitherto, and made men forsake their sins.—*Bp. Ryle.*

[13578] The manner in which you speak of the cross is the best assurance of the success which awaits your ministry; your apostolic enthusiasm shall not be wanting in apostolic results; he who uplifts the cross shall surely share the exaltation and blessedness of his Lord.—*Dr. Parker.*

## VII. HOMILETICAL HINTS.

### I The teaching of the cross.

(i) *It teaches the duty of personal consecration and obedience to God.*

[13579] In the cathedral at Antwerp there is a picture of the crucifixion by Rubens; and go in when you will, you see a little group of painters busy transferring the outlines, and as much of the soul of the painting as they can catch, to their own canvas. Poor enough some of these copies are, but they are after the great master, and the artists do the best they can. That is just what all Christians should do with the spiritual Christ, with the solemn invisible cross; sit and gaze, and so paint the scene—the inimitable scene of grandeur and love, upon the inward loving soul—till one and another shall arise and say, “I too can bear the cross, my own cross, by the power of His; I too can die, if need be, for Him and for His Church; die I must, if not by martyrdom yet by service. I am bought with this price, and bound to glorify Him whose I am. ‘I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.’”—*A. Ralegh, D.D.*

[13580] Had His obedience been limited to something short of death, then we would have felt encouraged to set a limit, and that a much narrower limit, to our own obedience; . . . it would have been impossible to say exactly how much had been required of Him, and therefore how much could be required of us. And timid martyrs would, when called upon to suffer, have been tempted to yield to what they might have considered the necessity of the case; and sacri-

fice to idols under the plea that they could not be called upon to perform an act of obedience which had not been required of Christ Himself. And vain-glorious martyrs—some such there were—would have been encouraged, rashly and presumptuously, to offer themselves to the stake, urged on by the desire of yielding an obedience which Christ had never yielded, and of enduring sufferings with which even He was never tried. Wherefore in all things, in obedience as well as other things, it became Him to have the pre-eminence.—*Marcus Dods, D.D.*

(2) *It teaches the duty of daily following Christ, and continually trusting in the merits of His sacrifice.*

[13581] The cross of Christ was not erected that thou shouldst be only a beholder thereof, but rather a follower; not to give thee a show, but a remedy, a daily help for thy necessity.—*Rev. John Fox.*

[13582] That blood which, as it were, we have beheld falling drop by drop on Golgotha, fell not thus fruitlessly to the earth. Those curtains of darkness shrouded something more than the manifestation of a moral sublimity. That cry of agony and desolation told of something more than a sense of merely personal suffering, or the closing exhaustions of a distressed humanity. The very outward circumstances of the harrowing history raise their voices against such a bleak and cheerless theosophy. The very details of the varied scenes of agony and woe plead meekly, yet persuasively, against such an estimate of the sufferings of an Incarnate God. May deeper meditations on these things bring conviction. May those who yet believe in the perfections of their humanity, and doubt the efficacy of their Redeemer's blood, unlearn that joyless creed. May the speculator here cease to speculate. May the casuist learn to adore. Yea, to us all, may fuller measures of faith and of loving assurance yet be ministered, that with heart and mind and soul and spirit we may verily and indeed believe that Christ was once offered, to bear the sins of many, and that, even as the beloved apostle has said, “He is the propitiation for our sins;” and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.—*Bp. Ellicott.*

(3) *It teaches the duty of self-dethronement.*

[13583] The cross is to the believer the one relentless annihilator of all selfishness. Now contemplate this for a moment; my better life is to be attained by the destruction of selfishness; and what follows? That my own personal holiness, regeneration, best life, is to be pursued and cherished, not for my own sake, which would be selfish; not for my gain, not for my heaven, not for my own salvation. For the other end only, for the kingdom of God, and then the two are in perfect harmony, and the cross has effected a real reconciliation that I needed, not an imaginary one, in God. Oh! how much of error and darkness lurks in the oblivion of that one Divine truth of the cross;



that by it I become a child of light, an immortal son of God ; and at the very same time I myself become nothing. For this child of light exists and lives only for the kingdom of God. The gospel of self-seeking never did, nor could, originate with a cross, the deep reality of which is death to self.—*S. Edgar, B.A.*

## 2 Modern crucifiers of Christ.

[13584] It is a significant fact that the crucifiers of Christ believed in Him. Every prominent actor in that great tragedy believed Him to be innocent, and believed Him to be more than a common man. Judas, who betrayed Him, had been His disciple and associate, and knew that He had miraculous power. The Pharisees, clamouring for His blood, also said, "This man doeth many miracles." The chief priests consulted how they might put Lazarus to death, because he had been the subject of His miracle-working ; and while they inspired the people to cry, "Crucify Him," they knew He was a just man, possessed of Divine power. So Pilate, who was made their instrument in crucifying the Lord, came, before pronouncing the sentence of death, to the full conviction, not only that He was a just man, but also that He was something more than man.—*Anon.*

[13585] It is true now, as in the days of Pilate, that the crucifiers of Christ are believers in Him. They may be divided into two classes, of whom Pilate and the chief priests are the representatives. The one class, like the Jews, hate Him because He reproves their wickedness and condemns their course of life, and because His requirements threaten the overthrow of their selfish plans and their wicked prosperity. The other class, like Pilate, have no distinctive or personal opposition to Christ, and only push Him aside, or condemn Him to the cross, when He stands in the way of their success. But the worldly policy of the Roman and the bitter hate of the Jew alike condemned Him to be crucified. God doesn't permit any one ignorantly and innocently to crucify the Lord. When a Saul of Tarsus, with a blind but honest fury, is fighting against Christ, He opens the very heavens to show him the Son sitting on the throne of His glory. A Pilate, yet uninformed concerning this new Teacher, is hindered and delayed by doubts of jurisdiction, by conflicting testimony, by his own questions of

policy, by his curiosity, and perhaps by the hope of a bribe, that before the fatal sentence is pronounced he may be fully convinced that He is a just person.—*Ibid.*

[13586] The rejecters of Christ are compelled to reject Him wilfully, if at all. If they do not begin with hatred of Him, but only indifference, they are brought to see, by the Word of God, by the fruits of Christianity, by the teachings of holy men, and by their own consciences, and by the spirit of God in their hearts, that this is the Son of God ; and they who crucify Him write above His head, "The King of the Jews."—*Ibid.*

[13587] In our day, as in the olden time, the crucifiers of Christ are divided into the three classes—there are betraying Judases ; hating, clamouring Jews ; and political and crafty Pilates ; but all are believers in Him, and all crucifiers of Christ.—*Ibid.*

[13588] Even in Christendom there are still such rough, unfeeling soldiers around the crucified One, many still who are crucifying the Lord afresh by their sins, although they bear His name. They also, like the rest of us, are placed beneath the cross of the Lord, as guardians, as members of His Church, to watch there, that the crucified Christ be not lost to us and ours, which only too easily happens. But this guardianship causes them no anxiety. They have no care but for the things of this world. In it they live with confident security. They interfere with that which belongs to Christ, just so far that they may enjoy its external advantages, those advantages which the name of Christ, the membership of His Church, may offer. They know well, and have in their hands the vesture of Christ, that is to say, the garment in which the Saviour now walks among men : His Word and sacraments, the means of grace which the Church offers. But in the use which they make of them they are as thoughtless as they are careless. But yet they also will fulfil the word of Scripture, the word of the Lord : "I never knew you : depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. vii. 23).—*Richard Rothe, D.D.*

[For full treatment of this subject, see Vol. II., Section IX., "THE SEVEN SAYINGS ON THE CROSS."]

## PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN  
GOD AND MAN*(Continued).*DIVISION D. *(Continued.)*

## [4] Christ's Glorious Resurrection.

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# RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(Continued).

## DIVISION D. (Continued.)

### 4

#### CHRIST'S GLORIOUS RESURRECTION.

##### I. ATTENDANT CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE RESURRECTION MORN.

##### 1 Discomfiture of the imperial watch and the rolling away of the stone.

[13589] The solemn awful hours of that Saturday creep on. Morning dies into evening, and the Roman guard, spear in hand, are still pacing before the sepulchre watching the imperial seal. . . . Evening dies into midnight, and the Roman guard, spear in hand, are still pacing, watching the imperial seal. The solemn awful hours creep on. Midnight begins to retreat before the advancing day, and the Roman guard, spear in hand, are still pacing, watching the imperial seal. O God of heaven! was there ever such a watch as that?

And now as it begins to dawn toward the first day of the week, while it is yet dark, lo! there is a great earthquake. And, lo! an angel of the Lord, with appearance like lightning and raiment white as snow, descends from heaven, and, rolling away the stone, sits upon it. And, lo! the Roman guard, aghast at Cæsar's broken seal, shake with terror, their nerveless hands unable to grasp their spears, their bodies prone on the ground as the bodies of the dead. Why these amazing prodigies? Why this trembling ground, this descending and dazzling angel, this rolling stone, this paralyzed guard? Ah! the Roman guard and Cæsar's seal and the rocky walls of Joseph's tomb are not stout enough to hold imprisoned Him who is the Lord of life and King of glory. True, no mortal saw Him in the act of rising. It was God's favourite way of doing His choicest, divinest things. Meet was it that the resurrection of His Son should take place in the majestic solemnity of an august solitude. But, although no one saw Him rise, or can tell the precise moment that He rose, there is one blessed thing that we do know. Some time during Saturday night the dead Jesus became the risen Christ, stepping forth from His tomb the conqueror of sin and death and hell.—*Epiphanies of the Risen Lord.*

##### 2 Visit of the women, followed by that of the two apostles, to the sepulchre, and the subsequent appearance there of Christ to Mary Magdalene.

[13590] Mary was one of the latest at the sepulchre on the evening of the burial, and now is one of the earliest at that sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection. Perhaps, more eager than the rest, she had hurried on before, and entered the garden alone. A quick glance, that waited not to catch even the sight of the angel's form, had shown her that the entrance was open, and the sepulchre empty. Overwhelmed with sorrow at the sight, and leaping at once to the conclusion that hostile hands had rifled the sacred tomb, Mary hurries back to the city. She seeks the house to which John had carried the mother of our Lord, and finds there both Peter and John. Apprised of her alarming tidings, they arise to run out together to the sepulchre. John's lighter footstep, quickened by his more ardent, more unburdened love, carries him soonest to the spot; but, at the entrance, his deep and reverential spirit holds him back in awe. Peter, of slower step, and still labouring, it may have been, under the burden of self-reproach, is behind John in the race; but, bolder or more impetuous, he stops not at the door, but, passing John, goes at once into the sepulchre. He draws his brother apostle after him, the one never dreaming of the influence he thus exerts, the other as little thinking of the influence he obeys. There the linen clothes are lying, with which Joseph and Nicodemus had swathed the body, and there, not loosely flung upon them in a disordered heap, but carefully folded up in a place by itself, lies that napkin which Mary herself may have helped to bind around the thorn-marked brow. Who had arranged them thus? Was it the hand of the great Sleeper Himself, on His awakening within the tomb? or was it some angel's hand that took the death garments, as they dropped from around the risen one, and thus disposed them? Whoever did it, there had been no haste; all had been done calmly, collectedly. Neither earthly friends nor earthly foes had done it: the one would not have stripped the garments from the body; the other would have been at no pains so carefully to

arrange and deposit them.—*Rev. Wm. Hanna, D.D.*

[13591] Peter, looking, is amazed, but his amazement shapes itself into no connected thought as he departs. John's quieter and deeper reflection suggests at once the idea that what has taken place is not a removal, but a reanimation of the body. An incipient faith in the resurrection forms within his breast. That rising faith, John kept to himself; he never boasted that he was the first of all the twelve to believe in the resurrection. Perhaps his first public mention of the fact was when, so many years afterwards, he sat down to write that Gospel which bears his name.—*Ibid.*

[13592] The brief inspection of the empty sepulchre over, John and Peter return silent and sad to their own home. Mary Magdalene had followed them, as best she could, in the running out to the sepulchre; but she does not join them in their return. Two evenings before she had clung to the tomb to the last, and this morning she clings to it still. The Master whom she had lost had rendered her the greatest of services; had been to her the kindest and best of friends. Mary Magdalene, standing alone weeping thus before the empty sepulchre, presents herself to our eye as the saddest and most inconsolable of all the mourners for the Crucified. Did you ever read of a more absorbing grief than that she, who was presently addressed by angels, should have no surprise, no astonishment to spare; but, as if unheeding who they were that spoke to her, should, out of the depths of her engrossing sorrow, only be able to repeat what she had said to Peter and John, varying the phrase a little—claiming a closer property in the departed—“Because they have taken away *my* Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him”? And she turns away, even from an interview with angels, to weep out without further interruption her most bitter grief.—*Ibid.*

[13593] But now, from other lips, the same question, “Woman, why weepest thou?” salutes her ear. She sees, but scarcely notices, the person who thus speaks to her. Taking him to be one who did not need to be told why she wept, who must know all about what had happened—the gardener of the place—she says to him, in the simplest, most artless way, “Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.” She is willing even to believe that it was with no unkindly purpose He had been removed. Only let her know where He is; and, all forgetful how unfit her weak hands were for such a task, she says—I will take Him away. “If it be an offence that He lies here in this rich man's tomb, so near the holy city, I will bear Him away to some remoter burial-place, where He may lie in peace, and where I may go and weep at will over His grave.” Jesus saith unto her, “Mary.” The old familiar voice! It can be only He who

names her so. Instantly, fully, the revelation of His living presence bursts upon her. She turns, and forgetting all about the new strange circumstances in which she sees Him, as if the former days of their familiar intercourse had returned, she says, *Rabboni!* and is about to clasp Him. Jesus stops the movement. “Touch Me not,” He says, “for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.”—*Ibid.*

[13594] “Fervently,” says St. Chrysostom, “did she speak, and lovingly.” He thinks with Athanasius, that on speaking, as she supposed, to the gardener, she was again turned to the angels, as if to inquire the cause why they were so amazed. And of her saying, “If thou hast borne Him hence,” without mentioning His name, St. Gregory well observes, “The force of love has usually this effect in the mind, that it supposes that he whom itself is always thinking of, no one else can be ignorant of.” It is, indeed, as Job says, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat!” yet without mentioning of whom he speaks. “Jesus saith unto her, Mary!” “It was,” says St. Cyril, “as if He would reprove the slowness of her faith.” But in fact it was that most gracious designation, “I have called thee by thy name, thou art Mine!” He calleth His own sheep by name, and they hear and know His voice. Her own name, and that of import so high, and spoken in accents so well known, brought suddenly to her mind, as with a sudden rush of thought, the unexpected, but full assurance of her Master's presence, so that she could not address Him, but in breathless adoration called Him, Master; and in awful, but silent worship, according to the custom of reverential prostration, so often spoken of among the ancients, embraced His sacred feet, “She turned and said unto Him, *Rabboni!* which is, being interpreted, Master.” Blessed, indeed, was this favoured and weeping mourner, first to behold, first to acknowledge, first to be spoken to by name, and to converse with “the First Begotten from the dead.”—*Rev. Isaac Williams, B.D.*

[13595] As this is the first appearance of our Lord, so may His words to Mary Magdalene be considered as the first authoritative declaration of redemption completed. And as the fall had been first by a woman, so to a woman, and to one that had experienced sevenfold the worst effects of that fall, “out of whom had gone seven devils,” is the announcement made; and by her mouth is first declared; by her first it is conveyed to the apostles, as by them to the world. To the first woman it was said, “Touch not, lest ye die:” but to Mary, “Touch not yet,” for human nature is not yet exalted to the right hand of God: but wait yet a few days, and you may freely touch, and eat, and live, and never die. Go thou, therefore, woman as thou art,



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and tell it unto My brethren: "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." St. Augustine's remark is important, that "He does not say our Father, but My Father, and your Father. In one sense, therefore, My Father, and in another yours; by nature Mine, by grace yours. Nor did He say our God, but My God, under whom I am as Man; and your God, between whom and Himself I am the Mediator." And St. Chrysostom, "This refers to the economy of His Incarnation, for ascending is spoken of the flesh. In one sense is He His Father, and in another sense is He ours, certainly altogether so; for if He is the God of the just in a different sense to what He is of other men, much more so of His Son and of us."—*Ibid.*

## II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THE RESURRECTION ON THE CHARACTER OF THE APOSTLES.

- I It transformed their hereditary faith, and inspired them with new thoughts, energies, and hopes.

[13596] If we compare the portraiture of the apostles as given in St. Luke's Gospel with that in his book of the Acts, we cannot but feel that we are looking on the same men, but transfigured in the latter case by the working of some mighty influence. There are the old traits of individuality, but they are ennobled. The relation in which the disciples stand to their Lord is not less personal, but it is less material. He is regarded as their Saviour as well as their Teacher. What was before vague and undecided is defined and organized. Those who when Christ was yet with them wavered in spite of their love for Him, mistook His words, misunderstood His purpose, forsook Him at His Passion, after a brief interval court danger in the service of a Master no longer present, proclaim with unfaltering zeal a message hitherto unheard, built up a society in faith on His name, extend to Samaritans and Gentiles the blessings which were promised to the people of God. However we explain it the change is complete and certain. Their whole moral nature was transformed. As far as we can see there was no spring of hope within them which could have had such an issue. The anticipations which they shared with their countrymen, and those which the immediate presence of Christ had awakened, were dissipated by His death. Whatever new impulse moved and animated them must have been from without, clear, and powerful. It must have been clear, to make itself felt to men who were in no way predisposed to yield to it: powerful, to remould once and for ever their notions of the work of Messiah. The resurrection satisfies both conditions.—*Prof. Westcott, D.D.*

[13597] If the crucified Lord did rise again, we can point to effects which answer completely

to what we may suppose to have been the working of the stupendous miracle on those who were the first witnesses of it: if He did not, to what must we look for an explanation of phenomena for which the resurrection is no more than an adequate cause?—*Ibid.*

[13598] The death of Christ annihilated at a stroke the Messianic expectations of the apostles. Their dejection was complete. But if, of all that they had hoped, nothing was ever realized, this dejection could not have passed away. There must be some intermediate historical fact to explain the transition; something must have occurred to revive, with new power, the almost effaced impression; to bring back the flow of their faith which had so far ebbed away. The reappearance, then, of Christ among His disciples is a connecting link in the chain of events which cannot possibly be spared.—*Neander.*

## III. ITS MANIFESTATIONS.

- I The resurrection of Christ is the great public display of His authority over the power of physical decay and death, and of victory over sin.

[13599] All others, in whatsoever age of the world, had been raised by a power from without, He alone by Himself. The power that revived all stands self-revived. This is indeed to "quicken whom He will;" this is indeed to "have life in Himself." But the case is even more pre-eminent in another view. In all other instances death had but touched the verge of God's real empire, and been at His pleasure repelled; here the rebel had stormed the citadel, and planted his dark standard in its inmost hold. That which is the very principle of vitality to the whole world had seemed to wither in His grasp upon the cross; when majestically rose the unvanquished Lord of life, and hurled him back and for ever to darkness. The resurrection of the dust of a thousand ages to the judgment, wondrous as it shall be, cannot approach to this. The dead who then shall live, shall live by a power exerted in all the fulness of visible and irresistible authority; it will be but the act of a known and recognized Creator, not perhaps as truly wonderful as a thousand natural processes that surround us every hour. But the dead Christ, who lived again, was prostrate under His enemy the hour He overwhelmed him; the conqueror was chained and bleeding beneath the foe He destroyed. As a man truly dead, He was inextinguishably alive as God.—*Rev. Wm. Archer Butler, M.A.*

[13600] If sin brought on man all those horrors which are concentrated in a human death, understood fully in all the possibilities of what it leads to—if, for thousands of souls, on account of sin, the first death is the prelude to death eternal—we do need the assurance that a man—the Man—the Son of Man—the representative of human nature—has so brought God and man together,

in His united Divine and human nature, that sin, as such, as well as mere outward death, is vanquished. Had Christ's death ended His history, where was the proof to us that He was victorious over sin, the cause of death? If we change the word from sin to the devil, the whole is clear. The devil stirred His enemies to slay Him. His death seemed to show that He fell under the devil's power, like any sinful son of Adam. But, rising, He proclaimed the downfall of the devil's empire, and that He was able and willing to rescue man from the devil's tyranny.—*Abp. Tait.*

#### IV. ITS POWER.

##### 1 Its realizing power.

(1) *Belief in the resurrection inspires man with the perception of God's moral government.*

[13601] The power of Christ's resurrection may be observed, first and generally, in the way in which belief in it enables a man to realize habitually the moral government of the world by God. Our age has many characteristics which nobly distinguish it from earlier times, but it is not an age in which men would believe, as they believed in the past, that whatever happened was overruled by a being who is perfectly good and perfectly wise. Now here the certainty that Jesus Christ rose from the dead asserted what St. Paul called its power. For when Jesus Christ was crucified it might have seemed—it did seem—that the sun of God's justice had gone down behind thick clouds, and that moral darkness had settled upon the earth. It might have seemed—it did seem—that while the vices were being feasted and crowned in Rome, all the virtues could be crucified, and crucified with impunity, in Jerusalem. It might have seemed that nothing was at a greater discount than moral beauty. But when He burst forth from the grave in which they had laid Him under the seal and stone, He proclaimed to men's senses, as well as to their consciences, that the real law which governed the world was moral, and not material, and that the sun of God's righteousness, if it were at times overclouded in human history, was sure to reappear. To know that Jesus Christ rose from the dead was to know that, whatever might be the perplexities of the moment or of the age, the world was really governed by God's most holy, overruling providence.—*Canon Liddon.*

##### 2 Its persuasive power.

(1) *In the appeal of this truth to the mind, it emphatically endorses the perfect verity of the Christian faith.*

[13602] The power of the resurrection of Christ is seen in the firm persuasion which it creates in our own days, as in the days of the apostles, that the Christian creed is true—true as a whole, true in its several constituent parts. And thus the resurrection of Christ has a twofold aspect. It is at once a truth of the Christian creed, and it is a proof that the Christian creed is true.—*Ibid.*

[13603] The resurrection of Christ is the certificate of our Lord's mission from heaven, to which He Himself pointed as a warrant of His claims.—*Ibid.*

##### 3 Its spiritual and moral power.

(1) *As witnessed to in the Christian's life.*

[13604] A new power has entered into human life, the vast power of sincere belief in a future world. In the presence of Christ's resurrection every true Christian feels that this life is an insignificant preface to the rest, that it is merely the shadow which precedes the substance, but upon which the attainment of the substance depends, that the longest life is a mere halt upon the brink of the eternal world—that world of awful, unchangeable realities. Here, I say, where a man has a sincere belief there is a tremendous power, a power which can invigorate the will, and purify affection, and check the fire of passion, and quicken into life the languor of despair—a power which elevates the whole aim and scope of life, which forbids petty aims and indulgences, and bids each one of us, in success and in failure, in great things and in small, in private and in public, ever to forget the present in the future, to remember "what is the hope of our calling, and what the riches of the glory of our inheritance among the saints."—*Ibid.*

[13605] What are the necessary conditions of an effective moral power, of a power which shall stimulate and control feeling, resolution, action? There are, I apprehend, two main conditions which must be satisfied by any such power which are satisfied, and that amply by the resurrection of our Saviour. For human life, looked at on its practical side, is made up of two things, action and suffering. And Christian life corresponds to human life in this, that it too, and in an eminent degree, is made up of these two things. A Christian acts, and a Christian suffers, not because he cannot help doing so, but with his heart and in virtue of a principle. He transfigures the necessities of ordinary human life into opportunities for acts of virtue. But then, if he attempts more, he also needs more than natural men need, a more definite and higher aim, a more pleasant and sustaining aid. Now the resurrection of the Lord Jesus satisfies these conditions, and I add that it does so on a magnificent scale. . . . It opens out before the eye of the soul its one adequate end in all action and in all endurance—union of the whole man with God, extending throughout the vast perspectives of a boundless eternity.—*Ibid.*

[13606] We live in a day when men ask for positive grounds of thought and action, and the power before us is the power not of a sentiment but of a fact. The phases of mere feeling which pass rapidly over the generation of men are like the forms of the clouds above our heads, beautiful but evanescent, but a fact such as the resurrection remains. . . . It remains through days, through years, almost through lives of neglect, to claim at the last the vast homage of the mind

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and heart of man which rightfully belongs to it, to make itself felt in thought and in practice, to ennoble our dealings with our fellow-creatures, to define our true relationship to God.—*Ibid.*

#### V. ITS UNQUESTIONABLE WITNESS TO CHRIST'S DIVINITY.

[13607] Why is the resurrection of Christ instanced as the one decisive sign of His being the Son of God?

1. Because Christ was raised from the dead by His own power, as well as by the power of the Father and the Holy Spirit (John ii. 19, x. 18). The sun has light in itself, the moon only reflects it; the loadstone has magnetic influence in itself, but the iron blades which are wrapped up with it have only a derived power. These illustrations may help us in some measure to understand the subject in hand. He rose by His own innate power, we only by virtue of His resurrection.

At Christ's death His human soul was separated from His human body, but His divinity from neither; hence it was that He rose by His own power, and declared Himself to be the Son of God.

2. Christ's resurrection is also ascribed to the power of God (Acts ii. 24, iii. 15, viii. 11; Eph. i. 20; Col. ii. 12). Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God, and by His resurrection this claim was substantiated. Suppose a prince, visiting a distant part of his father's realm *incognito*, were to inform some of the inhabitants that he was the son of their king, and suppose the rulers were to cast him into prison, and send him back to their sovereign. Now, were the king to release his son, and enable him to complete the object of his visit, and afterwards seat him on his throne beside himself, what clearer public attestation could be furnished to the truth of the claims advanced by him?

To understand how the resurrection of Christ declares Him to be the Son of God, it will be well to remember that the resurrection was strictly connected with the ascension and exaltation of Jesus. The resurrection was the beginning of the reward, and the ascension its continuance, rather than a separate and distinct stage of the Redeemer's career.

3. Because Christ's resurrection implied, guaranteed, and involved that of His people. As His divinity gave infinity of value to His death as our ransom, so His divinity gave infinity of value to His resurrection, so that He could say, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John xi. 25; cf. chap. viii. 29; Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 5).—*C. N.*

[13608] The resurrection was the crowning evidence of the Divine character of Christ's mission. He had Himself spoken of it as that which should be the most convincing proof to the world that He really was what He professed Himself to be. He had announced it even to His enemies as the one

great sign which they were to receive (Matt. xii. 38-40). When, therefore, He actually rose, it is impossible to separate the miraculous event from the truth of those claims on whose behalf He had Himself appealed to it. By the mighty power of God alone could He have risen. In this light, therefore, it was constantly, and with irresistible conclusiveness, appealed to by the apostles when they addressed the world, and in this light it is still to be appealed to by the ministers of the gospel. As a simple fact it takes the highest place in that series of proofs by which Jesus is declared to be "the Son of God with power" (Rom. i. 1).—*Rev. W. Milligan, D.D.*

#### VI. THE RESURRECTION AS IT AFFECTS HISTORY AND THE CHURCH.

1 The resurrection is not an isolated event in history, but at once the end and the beginning of vast developments of life and thought.

[13609] The student of history will readily see that the great forms of Christian progress which have been marked out correspond in a remarkable manner with other great periods in art and literature and science. The divisions are neither arbitrary nor applicable only to some parts of human life. The final result of each was a permanent advance, and the power by which each was animated was drawn from the gospel. If the fact of the resurrection be in itself, as it confessedly is, absolutely unique in all human experience, the point which it occupies in history is absolutely unique also. To this point all former history converges as to a certain goal: from this point all subsequent history flows as from its life-giving spring. So far from being beset by greater difficulties than any other historical fact, it is the one fact towards which the greatest number of lines of evidence converge. In one form or other pre-Christian history is a prophecy of it, and post-Christian history an embodiment of it.—*Prof. Westcott, D.D.*

[13610] Every precept of Christianity is quickened by the power of the death and resurrection of Christ. It is by the presence of this power that they are Christian; and it is as Christian that they conquer the world. Nothing could show a more profound misapprehension of the gospel than to substitute the name Catholicity for Christianity in the estimate of its social and political work. Its essence lies in the exhibition of a personal Saviour. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth 'Jesus is Lord,' and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." From this confession and this faith spring directly the various organizations of the Church which have found acceptance at different times and under different circumstances. The one fact of the resurrection underlies them all, and when divorced from it they lose their vitality. This being so, it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of a living apprehension of the resurrection as the



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apostles announced it. It is not taken out of the range of possible facts by any antecedent considerations; and, as it seems, no other evidence in its favour, consistent with its character as the basis of a religion at once historical and spiritual, could have been more complete than that which still lies within our reach.—*Ibid.*

- 2 The Christian Church was founded upon belief in the resurrection, and embodied this faith in rites coeval with its foundation.

[13611] Here we have existing in the world a vast community of men and women, bound together and actuated by a common belief, which raises them above the fear of death, exerts upon their character a purifying and elevating influence, and renders them the mightiest power in the world. And the centre of that belief is the doctrine of the resurrection. They differ in points of greater or less importance; but they are all agreed in the belief that Jesus of Nazareth, after being crucified and buried, rose from the dead on the third day. This is the keystone of their creed. And however far back its history may be traced, the result is the same. We can go up through the centuries until we come to one who was the companion of the Apostle John; and we find that in his day, so near to the time at which it was said to have taken place, the resurrection was believed in by the Church as firmly as it is now; and that the Gospels which contain the record of the event were recognized as the productions of the men whose name they bear. Nay, more, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the genuineness of which no sceptical critic has dared to impugn, we find Paul, only twenty or twenty-five years after the event, mentioning the resurrection as one great part of the apostolic gospel, and as being most surely held by the Corinthian and other branches of the Christian Church.

We can thus trace the doctrine of the resurrection to its source, and see that it was no gradual innovation into the Church's belief; no doctrine gradually taking shape, as myths do, from ideas which have been floating about in the minds of men; but an alleged fact, attested by those who professed to be eye-witnesses of the event; and believed in by the Church at a time when these witnesses were still alive.—*Rev. Wm. Landels.*

[13612] The resurrection, perhaps, more than any other event in the history of Christ, is bound up with the hopes of His disciples, and with the character of His Church. The birth, for instance, would be admitted to be one of the most blessed events which the world has witnessed, by many who would be unwilling to subscribe to the Catholic faith, but who would willingly admit the primacy of the human race to belong to Jesus Christ. The crucifixion also leaves no room for doubt upon historical grounds, and may well be recognized as a fact of immeasurable moral value by those who yet may be

unable to apprehend the full meaning and mystery of the Lord's sufferings and death. But the resurrection is a fact of another class; it is an alleged preternatural occurrence, upon the truth of which the character of the apostles is staked, and upon which as a foundation the Church of Christ stands: it is impossible either for friend or foe to separate the Christian faith from the truth of Christ having risen again: the resurrection is either a cardinal fact in the history of the human race, or else it is a deplorable example of imposture, the more deplorable on account of its very general success.—*Bp. Goodwin.*

[13613] The belief in the resurrection which was the groundwork of the Church, penetrated every part of its faith and worship. The earliest Christian kept "the eighth day for joy" as that on which Jesus rose from the dead; . . . and the two rites which were of universal observance commemorated not obscurely the same central fact. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist is absolutely unintelligible without faith in a risen Saviour. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." The rite was not a memorial of death simply, but of death conquered by life. The seal of the efficacy of the death of Christ was given in the resurrection; and the limit of the commemoration of His Passion was looked for in His return. Baptism, again, was regarded as embodying the teaching of the same facts: "We were buried with Him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." So thoroughly was the faith in the resurrection of Christ inwrought into the mind of the first Christians that the very entrance into their society was apprehended under the form of a resurrection. The fact was not an article of their creed, but the life of it. It was confessed in action as well as in word. And no evidence of the power or reality of a belief can be less open to suspicion than that which is derived from public services, which, as far as all evidence reaches, were contemporaneous with its origin and uninterruptedly perpetuated throughout the body which holds it.—*Prof. Westcott, D.D.*

## VII. THE RESURRECTION AS IT AFFECTS MAN.

### I It opens to man the gate of eternal life.

[13614] The resurrection of Christ is a meritorious cause of the saints' resurrection, as it completed His satisfaction and finished His payment, and so our justification is properly assigned to it. This His resurrection was the receiving of the acquittance, the cancelling of the bond. And had not this been done, we had still been in our sins, as He speaks (1 Cor. xv. 7), and so our guilt had still been a bar to our happy resurrection. But now, the price being paid in His death, which payment was finished when He revived, and the discharge then re-



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ceived for us, now there is nothing lies in bar against our resurrection to eternal life.—*J. Flavel*, 1691.

[13615] Though the death of Christ was the reconciling of the world to God, yet the resurrection of Christ is the great and solid foundation of our hope and faith in Him, even of our faith in His blood, by which He made the propitiation for our sins: and therefore, although Christ died for our offences, and by His precious blood made atonement for our sins; yet, since our faith in His death, our hope in His blood, by which hope and faith we are justified, are built on the truth and credit of His resurrection, it is very properly said that "He rose again for our justification:" for the death of Christ would have been no justification to us, nor could we have had hope or faith in it, but for the power and glory of the resurrection; which has wiped away the scandal and ignominy of the cross, and made it a rational act of faith to hope for life and immortality from Him who Himself once died on the tree.—*Bp. Sherlock*, 1678-1761.

## 2 It gives to man a present, living communing Saviour.

[13616] Let us take care lest in our devotion to the mighty doctrine of the cross we make too little of the mighty doctrine of the crown. We need not only the atoning work of Christ's historic death; we need also the sanctifying work of Christ's risen, present life. The Saviour we want is something more than a Divine statue, even though that statue be the crucified corpse of the Son of God petrified into heaven's own gold. We want the inspirations of a risen, exalted, vitalizing, loving, communing, Heavenly Friend. And this the resurrection of the Lord Jesus gives us. No, ours is not the Church of the entombment; ours is the Church of the coronation. All hail, then, the day which celebrates the resurrection of the Divine Man! For that resurrection means the birth and immortal growth of the Divine Man's Church. March forth, then, in exultant might, O Church of the First-born from the dead! Stride forth with mien elate and step triumphant. Thine is not a funeral procession, following with wail and coronach an embalmed Galilean: thine is a triumphal progress, following with bugle and psalm the risen, living, diademed Immanuel.—*Epiphanies of the Risen Lord*.

## VIII. PRACTICAL LESSONS OF THE RESURRECTION.

### 1 It enforces the duty of spiritual aspiration.

[13617] The whole alphabet of human hope is in this Resurrection Day; and whatever is to be spelled out in the literature of infinity and immortality is included in its celebration. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things

above, not on things on the earth." It does not mean that we are to exclude ourselves from affection, from pleasure, or from joy in this world; it means that the things which we want to have we are to place, as it were, on the shore of immortality, and that we are to love them here so as that we may love them above. It means that we are to give permanence to every thing that is noble in us, by writing it on the background of the eternal world.—*H. Ward Beecher*.

[13618] The practical lesson learned from Christ's resurrection should be—*Elevation, Rising*. Especially as Easter comes round every year (though not then only) to make a new start, get some step higher. Our final resurrection will be the climax of a multitude of previous risings, and this is the Christian's true excelsior! To remove some stone from the sepulchre, to unloose some barrier, and go forth like the risen Saviour with new power. Our contemplations are not to be sweet, but *useless* reveries; but the forming of some new endeavours to rise with Christ, and make a new start in the risen life.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

### 2 It teaches the need of perpetual holiness.

[13619] Union with a risen Saviour is the foundation and source of a life of holiness. "Risen with Christ." All who are united to Him are sharers of His resurrection standing, and partakers of His resurrection life (Col. ii. 12, 13, iii. 1; Rom. iv. 4-13; Eph. ii. 5, 6) "Dead to sin," they are henceforth made "alive unto God." Hence arises—(1) Their security (John xiv. 19). (2) Their obligation to holiness (Rom. vi. 4, 5, vii. 4, viii. 13). (3) Their hope of the perfect consummation of that eternal life which they shall enjoy when they fully know "the power of His resurrection," and live with Him in His eternal kingdom.—*Ibid.*

[13620] The resurrection of Christ is more than evidence of what He was and is. It shows us the light in which we are to hold communion with Him, and thus expresses to us the nature of that life which His followers are to lead. To the follower of a risen Saviour all things here below are touched with the glory of the resurrection; that, surrounded though he is by death, it is not to death, but to the perfection of an already begun endless life, that he is travelling; that our fellowship with Christ is to be another than it was in the days of His flesh; and that now, when He has ascended to His Father, it is by a like ascent, and in a like presence, that we shall know that His Father is our Father, and His God our God.—*Rev. W. Milligan, D.D.*

[13621] The strong argument for the truth of Christianity is the true Christian, the man filled with the Spirit of Christ. The best proof of Christ's resurrection is a living Church, which itself is walking in a new life, and drawing life from Him who hath overcome death. Before

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such arguments, ancient Rome, the mightiest empire of the world, and the most hostile to Christianity, could not stand.—*Prof. Christlieb.*

### 3 It unequivocally demands bodily purity.

[13622] The moral significance of such a doctrine as the resurrection of the body cannot be overrated. Both personally and socially it places the sanctions if not the foundations of morality on a new ground. Each sin against the body is no longer a stain on that which is itself doomed to perish, but a defilement of that which is consecrated to an eternal life. To injure another is to injure one with whom we are bound by the closest ties through a common fellowship in Christ. "The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His power. Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ?"—*Prof. Westcott, D.D.*

[13623] It is one thing to think of my future life hereafter, as the final escape and emancipation of my soul, my better part, from that gross physical frame whose companionship clogs and debases it here. It is quite another thing to look forward to my soul's resuming that very frame, and having it for a companion through eternity. In the former case, I am apt to feel that it matters comparatively little how I use this body of mine, what liberties I take with it, what indulgences I allow it. It is not properly myself, nor any vital part of myself, but rather an extraneous encumbrance. The pure ethereal spirit in me is to shake it off. And being rid of its temporary associate's lower tendencies and agitations for ever, it is itself to soar aloft, on the wings of its own higher aspirations, in the regions of cloudless mental serenity and repose. The favourite dogma of the "gnostics," or knowing ones—that matter is in itself essentially and incurably corrupt and the cause of all corruption—compelled them to deny the possibility of a literal bodily resurrection. Nothing but a spiritual resurrection could find a place in their creed; and they held that, in the case of believers, or at least in the case of the initiated, that spiritual resurrection was "past already." The soul, renovated by faith, is raised to newness of life. In its new life it is hindered and held down by the body until death sets it free. Then, either instantly or after a period of probation or purgation, the slough of the flesh is thoroughly cast off. And ever after, for ever, all is well. From this speculative theory of theirs, two practical conclusions flowed. It led them to throw the blame of whatever evil still adhered to them, not on the risen soul, but on the material body, which would not let the soul live purely and freely according to its renovated nature. And, worse than that, it led them to argue that the amount of evil, more or less, which might still adhere to them, was really very much a matter of indifference, since, being all centred in the body, it would be all got rid of when the body was cast aside. Thus by

brief stages their error led to sin.—*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*

## IX. SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE.

### 1 Generally considered.

(1) *On this one fact Christianity itself is based.*

[13624] If God Almighty did raise the Lord Jesus from the dead into glorified and unchangeable life, as no other man ever was raised, then Jesus was the Son of God as He claimed to be, His life as Divine as it professed to be, His miracles genuine, His teaching true, His pretensions valid, His death innocent, His passion propitiatory and atoning. But if God did not raise this man, the Christian advocate throws up his case, our faith is false, our fancied Saviour an impostor, and we are in our sins like other men. So the case stood when Peter preached and Paul wrote. So it stands still.—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

(2) *It is this fact which gives to mankind a certified gospel, or accredited salvation.*

[13625] The real battle between the powers of heaven and the powers of hell was fought, not on Pilate's cross, but in Joseph's tomb. At the pivotal moment Divinely appointed in the drama of time, the Son of Man, on whose corpse the king of all lost worlds was sitting in ghastly triumph, uprose, and toppling the kingdom of darkness, serenely stepped forth King of kings and Lord of lords. Then was the Son of David according to the flesh declared to be with power the Lord of David and the Peer of God. Then was the work of Adam undone, the curse uplifted, the everlasting righteousness brought in, the kingdom of heaven begun. Then waved before the Ancient of Days the pledge-sheaf of the harvest of the Church of the resurrection. Then began the eternal reign of Him who is all in all. Thus the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the pivotal fact of Christianity. It certifies beyond peradventure His religion. The founders of other religions—Confucius, Zoroaster, Brahma, Mohammed—have died; but where is the evidence that they ever rose from the dead? It is the resurrection of Christ which is the absolutely unique fact of Christianity, the majestic demonstration of its infinite certainty. This it is which proves it to be a gospel indeed—good tidings of great joy unto all peoples. Accordingly, the resurrection of Christ stands forth in the apostolic theology as the epitome and very label of Christianity itself. And well it may; for it involves the whole story of the Incarnation. He who has risen must have died, and He who has died must have lived, and He who has lived must have been born. Jerusalem's empty tomb proves Bethlehem's holy manger. And so it comes to pass that belief in the resurrection of Christ is the touchstone of the Christian faith, the key to the kingdom of heaven: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from

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the dead, thou shalt be saved."—*Epiphanies of the Risen Lord.*

### 3 Specially considered.

#### (1) *As to its personal value.*

[13626] The importance of the resurrection of Christ is a thing which we must each learn for ourselves; it will not be felt by our being assured by others that it is important. But few persons of any education reach the age of manhood without having an opportunity to learn it, whether they choose to avail themselves of it, or to neglect it. I mean that there is a time, even before we commence the active business of life, when we are led to hold question with ourselves, and to ask what we are living for, and to what we are tending. It need not be either sickness, or any great calamity, which will lead us to this state; the same effect may be produced by happiness of an unusual kind, as well as by suffering. Nay, it need not be produced by either, nor by any remarkable outward circumstances; it may be merely the natural effect of our own minds, feeling their powers, and keenly alive to the wonderful aspect which life wears, even when regarded in its common course of events. But be the exciting cause what it may, the effect is almost sure to occur: we commune with our own hearts, and think of life and death, and ask ourselves what will be our condition when sixty years are over; whether, indeed, we shall then have died for ever, or whether we shall but have fallen asleep in Christ, to be awakened by Him when the number of His redeemed is full.—*Thos. Arnold, D.D.*

### X. ITS NATURAL TYPES.

#### 1 The morning and the spring.

[13627] Poets and philosophers had mourned pathetically over the inequality of nature in this, that while other things had another life in store, yet man, who appeared like the lord of creation himself, seemed to have no resurrection. But now, after Christ had been indeed found to have risen from the grave, to them who obtained for the first time any glimpse of the truth, it must indeed have been like a "new creation"—"old things passed away, and all things become new." As they looked back upon the things of old, they must have called up in Holy Scripture a thousand incidents and expressions which were but shadows of what they now realized, and throughout all nature and providence all the mercies of God which had broken in on the distresses of mankind would appear but feeble reflections of what had come to light that morning. For as our Lord was fulfilling all the types of Holy Scripture, so was He fulfilling also those of nature. Early in the morning He arose: and what is morning, after the darkness of the night, but a constant image which God has given us of the resurrection of Christ? He is Himself "the morning." "His going forth is prepared as the morning." He is "the Morn-

ing Star," "the East," the sun, "rising with healing in His wings."—*Rev. Isaac Williams, B.D.*

[13628] He chose that day to rise again which His Father chose to begin the creation, the first day of the week, that the same day might bear the inscription of the creation and of the restitution of the world; and that, as in that day the Lord God brought light out of darkness, so this light, the light that enlightens every man that comes into the world, should arise from the land of darkness, the grave. "This is the day that the Lord hath made; we will be glad and rejoice therein."—*Lord Chief Justice Sir Matthew Hale.*

[13629] It is the spring of the year. "Rise up, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing is come." And what is spring after winter but Nature speaking of the resurrection of her Lord? It is the season when day is lengthening and mastering the night; light is overcoming darkness, and life springing out of apparent death: as in the returning presence of Him who is very life and very light, and maketh all things new. And spring is also the season, as St. Cyril and St. Ambrose say, of the creation of the world: and as then at the first the command went forth to Nature, so now the command goes forth to the Church, to be "fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it." Then was it said, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion:" so was it then spoken, and so is it now being fulfilled, while we "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." And all this is as the earnest of that great morning wherein it is said, "we shall be like Him." "When I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it." "And let them have dominion!"—this also is now fulfilled in the power of the resurrection, as the Psalmist speaks, "Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands." Thus, as the morning and the spring return again and again, so after the manner of Christ's resurrection, and in the image and likeness of God, must men arise, and be renewed day by day, while day by day the outer man perishes.

As this, therefore, is the day of the creation of light, so this is the season also of the creation of the world, which spring from year to year keeps up the remembrance of. The new light of the kingdom spreads itself over the earth, the new vine is putting forth its leaves as in spring, from which there will be, in due time, that wine which our Lord will drink new with His disciples in the kingdom of God. All things at this season speak of a new world; it is like a feeble effort to recover the past, and an earnest of future regeneration; even the heathen poet saw in this an annual memorial of creation:

"At the first rising of the infant world

Thus must the days have shone; no fairer course



Have held ; then all was spring ; one genial  
spring  
Fill'd the big world ; no wintry blasts were  
nigh ;

When new-born creatures first drank light."  
—*Rev. Isaac Williams, B.D.*

## XI. ITS OLD TESTAMENT PREDICTIONS.

[13630] The resurrection of Jesus had been predicted by the prophets, in some instances directly, and in many, even in all that speak of "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that was to follow," by implication (Psa. xvi. 10, 11 ; Isa. liii. 10-12). With regard to the time of His rising, it is thought by some to have been implied in the fact mentioned of His not seeing corruption (Psa. xvi. 10). They conceive the meaning to be, that He should rise before the time when bodies in the grave began to putrefy (John xi. 39). There is no occasion, they allege, for introducing any miraculous agency in the matter, when the fact can be sufficiently accounted for on ordinary principles. The embalming of the body and the shortness of the time they regard as enough, when taken together, to account for the fact, of no corruption having taken place. It is a matter of little moment whether we suppose nature only, or natural and supernatural agency combined. It is simply the fact of His seeing no corruption that is predicted and affirmed ; and we are sure that, in so far as corruption was possible naturally within the time, it was supernaturally prevented, so that in no degree whatever had it place. The time was also typically intimated by the case of Jonah, as our Lord Himself teaches us (Matt. xii. 40). According to Horsley, was it allegorically implied, too, in the prophecy of Hosea (chap. vi. 2). On the words, "We shall live in His presence," he has the following note : "Jehovah, who had departed, will return, and again exhibit the signs of His presence amongst His chosen people. So the Jews, converted and restored, will live in His presence and attain to the true knowledge of God, which they never had before. The two days and the third day seem to denote three distinct periods of the Jewish people. The first day is the captivity of the ten tribes by the Assyrians, and of the two under the Babylonians, considered as one judgment upon the nation ; beginning with the captivity of the ten, and ending in that of the two. The second day is the whole period of the present condition of the Jews, beginning with the dispersion of the nation by the Romans. The third day is the period yet to come, beginning with their restoration at the second advent. R. Tanchem, as he is quoted by Dr. Pococke, was not far, I think, from the true meaning of the place. "The prophet," he says, "points out two times ; and these are the first captivity, and a second. After which shall follow a third time, redemption ; after which shall be no depression or servitude." And this I take to be the sense of the prophecy, in immediate application to the Jews. Nevertheless, whoever is

well acquainted with the allegorical style of Scripture prophecy, when he recollects that our Lord's sufferings were instead of the sufferings and death of sinners ; that we are baptized into His death, and by baptism into death are buried with Him ; and that He, rising on the third day, raised us to the hope of life and immortality ; will easily perceive no very obscure, though but an oblique allusion to our Lord's resurrection on the third day ; since every believer may speak of our Lord's death and resurrection as a common death and resurrection of all believers.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

## XII. ITS PREDICTION BY OUR LORD.

[13631] Very early in the course of our Lord's ministry the Jews asked Him for a "sign" by which to vindicate His authoritative act in clearing the temple, and our Lord gave them, in mystical language, that of His resurrection. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John ii. 19), words which the Evangelist says, "He spake of the temple of His body." Later on in His ministry, when a similar demand was made by "certain of the Scribes and Pharisees," "He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas ; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. xii. 39, 40). To His disciples He spoke with greater plainness, ending the prediction of His passion with the words, "And the third day He shall rise again." The disciples "understood not that saying," "questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean" (Mark ix. 10, 32), and the understanding of the words seems only to have come to them when recalled by the angel to the memory of those who went to the empty tomb (Luke xxiv. 7, 8). But our Lord seems to have made the idea of His resurrection familiar to them and to the Jews, as if it were the foundation-stone of doctrine respecting His work, and the crowning evidence respecting His person.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

## XIII. ITS NECESSITY TO THE INCARNATION.

1 The resurrection of Christ is essentially implied in the very fact of His marvelous birth.

[13632] What shall we venture to predicate as credible or incredible concerning the child who is thus born to us, and whose name is emphatically, Wonderful ? Shall we say that the experience of four thousand years, even though it should be allowed to have been broken by no one single exception, by an Enoch, for instance, or an Elijah, must necessarily exhibit all the facts and phenomena of such an Incarnation ? Shall we venture to apply empirical material laws, without any doubt concerning their perfect generality, to such a case as this ? Or shall



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we not be more philosophical, as well as more religious, if we acquiesce in the conclusion, that it was impossible for the body of this Holy One to see corruption?—*Bp. Goodwin.*

#### XIV. ITS CREDIBILITY.

- 1 The resurrection of Christ is firmly believed in, not by the simple and ignorant only, but by the most profound thinkers.

[13633] Is the resurrection of our Lord a thing incredible? Manifestly in one sense at least it is not; because we find it to be matter of fact, not only that the apostles and early martyrs were willing to lay down their lives in testimony of their belief of it, but that hundreds and thousands of persons *do* believe it in the present day. And if it be said that this assertion holds only of poor ignorant folks, or of those who are not in the habit of analyzing their thoughts and distinguishing between what they really believe and what they fancy they believe, it is to be replied, that the assertion cannot be confined to such persons; for it is certainly the fact, that a multitude of men well educated and well informed, every way calculated to estimate aright the difficulties belonging to such an article of faith, are of the number of those who do receive the resurrection of the Lord as a simple reality. And not only so; for the number of believers includes many of the most penetrating and profound minds, bred under those very conditions, which are supposed to render impossible faith in things transcending ordinary human experience. Thus, if I may venture to single out from those belonging to our own country one of the most remarkable intellects of recent times, I would call to mind that Coleridge in the maturity of his thoughts found in the Christian faith, not that which the onward progress of modern thought must of necessity obliterate, or at least transform so as to be something quite different from what it was, but (as he himself testifies) “the perfection of human intelligence.” And even with regard to the German schools of divines, upon which many of us are accustomed to look with so much jealousy, it is to be observed, that if there be writers of eminence who profess to deem such a fact as the resurrection incredible, names of other eminent writers,—names quite as weighty, to say the least,—may be mentioned, as those of men, who, with precisely the same data before them, have arrived at the precisely opposite conclusion.—*Ibid.*

#### XV. ITS INFALLIBLE PROOFS.

- 1 No historical fact has ever been established upon a greater amount of evidence.

[13634] The resurrection of our Lord is not merely noticed in one or two Christian writings of an early date, but it is noticed or implied, or taken for granted, in almost every Christian document which we possess. Sometimes it is

referred to historically, sometimes as a sign of Christ's Majesty, sometimes as a ground of exhortation; and even when no express reference is made to the fact, still the whole circle of early Christian literature ever speaks of Christ, not as a man who was once crucified and there an end, but as one who having been crucified is alive and employed actively in the care of His Church upon earth. In fact, it is palpable, that all the utterances of the early Christians, whether by speech or by letter, assume this as an underlying fact, without which they are by no means intelligible, that Jesus Christ was not dead.—*Ibid.*

[13635] The resurrection of the Saviour is proclaimed to be a fact by the testimony of human witnesses. We have the evidence of His disciples, whose hands handled Him, whose eyes beheld the marred visage after it had confronted the cross and faced the tomb, and whose ears drank in the music of His voice after His lips had been locked in the seal of death; we have their testimony that He rose again. These men were intelligent witnesses, and their incredulity would show that they were not weakly superstitious or easily imposed upon. They were also men of probity, and had no worldly advantage to acquire from the publication of such a circumstance, but quite the opposite. They had known Christ surely long enough to recognize Him again when He appeared amongst them; and with one concurrent voice they testify, “He is risen from the dead!” This, too, is strengthened by the testimony of angels, and by their various appearances as bearers of the news. It is from an angel's lips that the testimony in the chapter before us comes. We have but to refer to John's account, and there we find that two angel watchers by the empty tomb were there to tell the weeping Mary of the resurrection of her Lord. So that we not only adduce the disciples to attest to the fact of His having risen, but we call the angels of the Lord, who spread their wings around His sepulchre, and who comforted the sorrowing women as they wept, to declare that “He is risen from the dead.”—*Arthur Mursell, D.D.*

[13636] The resurrection of Christ was not denied even by His enemies, but was covertly recognized and admitted, even while the Jews agreed to a traditional falsehood to conceal from their posterity that which they knew to be a fact. The apostles continually attested the fact, as also did the fathers of the primitive Christian Church: Ignatius, Polycarp, and the other venerable custodians of the truth. He rose, moreover, with the same body as that in which He had lived and died. This is abundantly testified in the Gospels. His empty tomb is a witness of it, and the recognition by His disciples of His lacerated brow and wounded hands places it beyond all doubt.—*Ibid.*

[13637] We can even summon falsehood as a witness in the cause of truth. There had been

no need for the framing and circulation of the story of the disciples taking away the body of their Master, unless the Lord had actually risen from the dead.—*M. J.*

**2 No event of bygone times stands on a more solid foundation.**

[13638] It is proved by a variety and wealth of evidence such as we never find arrayed in favour of the most glorious facts of ancient, and rarely of modern, history. Not a few of the prophetic declarations of the Old Testament bear testimony to this fact of facts. Some of the clearest prophecies uttered by Christ Himself prove its historic certainty as well as its supreme importance. The writings of the Evangelists relate it with a circumstantiality and vividness which perfectly vindicate the character of contemporary evidence imparted to them. The Epistles of the other writers of the New Testament corroborate their accounts as well by incidental references as by direct allusions and formal recapitulations. The writings of the Fathers, Apostolic and post-Apostolic, present corroborative proofs with equal clearness and profusion. The glorious triumph of Christianity in the early ages of the Church and its present ascendancy presuppose the historic certainty of the great event; and the magnificent moral revolution accomplished by Christianity becomes an inexplicable enigma if its truth is denied. It is, therefore, an unassailable, indisputable fact, and on this rock our religious principles and hopes are based.—*Ram Chandra Bose, D.D.*

**XVI. HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTIC RECORDS.**

**1 In the Gospel narratives there is perfect agreement in fundamentals, notwithstanding apparent discrepancies in statement, and variation as to details.**

[13639] If Christ really rose from the dead, then we have an easy solution of the fact that the Gospels are of entire accord in their several accounts of this occurrence, notwithstanding the numerous incidents mentioned by the different writers, and some seeming discrepancies in their statements. On the contrary, if Christ did not rise from the dead, but His disciples stole away His body from the tomb, then it is inconceivable how, writing, as they evidently did, without collusion, the Evangelists have made no contradictory statements. In Matthew's account, short as it is, there are no less than thirty distinct incidents mentioned; in Mark's as many, in Luke's not less than fifty, in John's upwards of fifty; yet all the different incidents can be made to form one consistent narrative, although half of them must be untrue if Christ be not risen.—*Rev. Alex. Maclaren, D.D.*

[13640] The fundamental point is the fact of the resurrection; upon this point the accounts are unanimous. The diversity in detail arises

from that of the witnesses who instructed the writers, or who themselves edited these narratives. It proves that no previous understanding between them, no astute calculations, governed these compilations.—*Prof. Godet.*

[13641] While there is so much apparent discrepancy in some of the narratives on a cursory examination, as altogether to remove the suspicion of collusion between the writers, there is not one single instance in which a clear and satisfactory solution of the difficulty may not be obtained.—*Rev. D. T. K. Drummond, B.A.*

**XVII. THE TESTIMONY OF ST. PAUL.**

**1 In each of his Epistles the literal fact of the resurrection is the implied or acknowledged groundwork of the apostle's teaching.**

[13642] The letters of St. Paul are amongst the earliest, if not actually the earliest, writings in the New Testament. Of these one important group has been recognized as certainly genuine even by the most sceptical critics. No one doubts that the Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans were composed by St. Paul, and addressed to the Churches whose name they bear. Nor is there much uncertainty as to the date at which they were written. The most extreme opinions fix them between A.D. 52–59, that is under no circumstances more than thirty years after the Lord's death (A.D. 30–33). There can then be no doubt as to the authority of their evidence as expressing the received opinion of Christians at this date, and there can be no doubt as to the opinion itself. The very designation of God is "He who raised up the Lord from the dead." In this miracle lay the sum of the new revelation, the sign of Christ's Sonship. To believe this fact and confess it was the pledge of salvation. On this there is no trace of disagreement. Some, indeed, questioned the reality of our own resurrection, but they were met by arguments based on the resurrection of Christ which they acknowledged. Whatever else was doubted this one event was beyond dispute.—*Prof. Westcott, D.D.*

[13643] The apostolic view of the nature of Christ is deduced from His rising again. In one place (1 Cor. xv. 3–11), St. Paul has given an outline of "the gospel" by which men "were saved." Nothing can be more simply historic than this passage. What we call the miraculous facts are placed beside the others without any difference. The resurrection of the Lord, and His appearances after the resurrection, are taught as events of the same kind essentially, and to be received in the same way as His death and burial. Together they formed "the gospel," and in this respect, whether it was "the Three" or St. Paul who preached, the substance of their preaching was the same.—*Ibid.*

## XVIII. THE DOCTRINE DEFENDED AGAINST RATIONALISTIC ASSAILANTS.

## 1 Chief objections urged.

(1) *That our Lord survived crucifixion, and was buried in a state of trance.*

[13644] The Evangelists, each one of them, say expressly that He did die; and the wonder is not that He died when He did after the three hours' agony on the cross, but that with all His sufferings at the hands of the soldiers and of the populace before His crucifixion, He should have lived so long. But suppose that what looked like death on the cross was merely a fainting fit, would He have survived the wounds in His side inflicted by the soldier's lance, through which the blood yet remaining in His heart escaped? We are expressly told that the soldiers did not break His limbs, and that He was already dead, and before Pilate would allow His body to be taken down from the cross he ascertained from the centurions that He was already dead. The Jews carefully inspected and sealed the tomb. They had sentinels placed there; they were satisfied that the work was thoroughly done. To do them justice, the Jews have never denied the reality of our Lord's death; it is impossible to do so without a paradox.—*Canon Liddon.*

[13645] Admitting that, if we knew none of the particulars of the story, the mere fact of a man surviving crucifixion is not impossible, still it is a great improbability; so great, that I am not aware of a single instance of there being such a fact on record, except in cases where it was the intention of the parties to save the life of the sufferer, and he was taken down avowedly before life was extinct. . . . In the first place, the centurion and soldiers appointed for that very purpose examined the body, and found that it was dead; yet, to make sure of it, so little was their inclination to make a false report in order to save Jesus, one of them pierced His side with His spear—the Roman pilum—the shaft of which was four inches wide, and which made, therefore, a wound so large, that, as appears afterwards, a hand might be thrust into it. And what name shall we give to the improbability of supposing, that in addition to the double improbability of any one surviving crucifixion, and, above all, a person under our Lord's circumstances, we have the further improbability, or rather, what is in itself an impossibility, of a person surviving such a wound, inflicted for the very purpose of ensuring His death, in the most vital part of the human body? Further, the body of Jesus, after having been taken down from the cross, was laid in a cave in a rock, bound round with linen cloths about His body, and over His head and face, in a manner which would have insured death by suffocation, if He had not been dead before, and watched by a guard of soldiers. And yet, within eight-and-forty hours afterwards, He was seen not only alive, but in perfect strength and vigour, presenting Himself to Mary Magdalene,

in the garden, in the morning; to two of His disciples, at Emmaus, six miles distant from Jerusalem, in the afternoon; and to His apostles at Jerusalem, in the evening; not as a man saved by miracle from dying of wounds, which must, at any rate, have left Him in a state of the most helpless weakness, but as He was in truth the Son of God, who had overcome death, and who retained only so much of His earthly nature as might prove to His apostles that it was He Himself, Jesus, who had been crucified, Jesus, who was now risen to live for ever.—*Thos. Arnold, D.D.*

(2) *That the very nature of the resurrection body of Christ, as evidenced in the Gospels, is of itself an indubitable proof of unreality.*

[13646] Our rationalistic friends urge: Is there not a glaring inconsistency in the representations given of the body of our Lord after His resurrection embodied in these narratives? The body is both corporeal and spiritual; both of the earth, earthy, and of heaven, heavenly. In some portions of the narratives it is represented as a corporeal body; it can be seen, touched, and felt, it can eat bread and broiled fish, and it bears marks fitted to prove its identity with the body which had been nailed to the cross. In other portions, however, of the selfsame narratives the resurrection body is represented as thoroughly spiritual. It is not subject to the laws of the natural body, is not circumscribed by the limitations which at times cause our free and excursive spirits to groan. It passes from place to place as a spirit, it makes itself visible and invisible, and it penetrates through closed doors and massive walls. How inconsistent these accounts! Does not this incongruity tend to demonstrate that the resurrection of Christ is a myth? When, however, our opponents speak in this strain, they forget that the unassuming nature of the body the narrators set forth as the one in which our Lord appeared after His resurrection is an incontestible proof of their veracity. If they had been fabricators of tales, or legend-mongers, rather than sober historians, they would not have made the appearances of Christ after His resurrection so tame and commonplace as they have made them. They would have made Christ appear in a body as glorious, at least, as that which some of them are reported to have seen, and been dazzled by, on the Mount of Transfiguration; and they would, very likely, have brought processions of angelic intelligences to add to the solemnity and picturesqueness of each of His glorious appearances. The vividness of the narratives is a proof of what may be called their contemporary character, while the vein of naturalness which flows through them is a proof of their complete trustworthiness or reliability. The body of Christ after His resurrection appears in a transition state, and its spiritualization or glorification was not completed till after the ascension; and all the difficulties connected with it may be explained by a simple reference to the process of preparation through



[13645-13649]

which it was passing during the period between His glorious triumph over death and His ultimate return to and reception in heaven!—*Ram Chandra Bose, D.D.*

(3) *That the resurrection is a myth, and the witnesses to it visionary enthusiasts.*

[13647] Is the visionary theory, revived by Strauss and endorsed by Schenkel and Rénan, well grounded and based on facts? No; it is, on the contrary, based on a number of gratuitous assumptions. It, in the first place, takes for granted that the disciples had weak minds and diseased bodies, and were, in consequence, susceptible of being easily victimized by hallucinations and phantasms of their own creation. . . . The manufacturers of this hypothesis do not pause to dwell on the series of impossibilities which it brings into bold relief. Was it possible that whole companies of men—men of different temperaments, varied constitutions, and diverse habits of thought—should be victimized at different times and under different circumstances by a series of spectres and phantasms; that a host of five hundred persons were at one and the same time so wrought upon by what is called a chain of sympathy, that their heated imagination conjured up the same hallucinations, and their judgment perpetrated the same errors? Then, again, these visions were presented to their minds not only when they, being gathered together in particular places, bewailed the death of their Master, or brooded over the misfortunes they had brought upon themselves by believing in Him, but when they were variously occupied. Mourning by the graveside, walking in the streets, travelling to a neighbouring village, seated around what may be called a family hearth, and fishing in a lake—do what they might they could not get rid of these visions. But this vision-malady, which prostrated them under all circumstances, did not last long. After a period of excitement had rolled away, after a few paroxysms of hallucination had passed away, these persons returned to their senses, and became sober-minded, sensible, and practical once more. Do not our rationalistic friends work miracles in their attempt to explain away the miracles recorded in the New Testament? Neither do these gentlemen pause to account for the absence on the part of the Jews, to whom these hallucinations, these phantasms of a diseased imagination, were reported as stubborn facts, of all attempts to set forth their aerial character. Why did they not, when these day-dreams were seriously and solemnly preached, resort to the easiest method of showing their real character?—*Ibid.*

2 Question raised: Why, if the resurrection can be proved by evidence so generally sufficient, was it at the time, and why is it still, rejected by a great many intelligent men?

(1) *The answer traced to the opposition of will and intellect in man.*

[13648] There can, I apprehend, be no sort

of doubt that, if an ordinary historical occurrence, such as the death of Julius Cæsar, is attested as clearly as the resurrection of our Lord—not, we will suppose, more clearly nor less—as having taken place nineteen centuries ago, all the world would believe it as a matter of course. Nay, more; if an extraordinary occurrence traversing the usual operations of God in nature were similarly tested, it would be easily believed if only it stood alone as an isolated wonder connected with no religious claims, implying no religious duties, appealing only to the bare understanding, and having no bearing, however remote, upon the will. The reason why the resurrection was not always believed upon the evidence of those who were witness to it was because to believe means for a consistent and thoughtful man to *believe in and accept practically a great deal else*. To believe the resurrection is to believe implicitly in the Christian faith. The intellect is not more interested in it than the will, perhaps it is even less interested. If the intellect alone could have the decision of the question in its keeping, the number of unbelievers would be comparatively small. The real difficulties of belief lie, generally speaking, with the will. It sees the conviction all but accepted; it sees the understanding stretching out its arms, as it were, to welcome the advancing truth, and it mutters to itself, "This must not be, or I shall be compromised; I shall have to do or to endure what I do not like." And such is the power of the will, the sovereign faculty in the human soul, that it can give effect to this decision. It can baulk and thwart the straightforward action of the intellect, it can give it a perverse twist, it can even set it thinking actively how best to discredit and refute the truth which but now it was on the point of accepting.

The will of the Jew instinctively suggested to him, "If Jesus of Nazareth rose from His grave, then a great deal will follow for which I am not prepared. Then He is the Messiah, then the present order of things will be seriously changed, new duties, new sacrifices, will be expected of me and mine. I must see if His resurrection is so very certain, if there is not some natural explanation of it to be found, if it is not due to a trick or to a hallucination; anyhow, it must not and it cannot be accepted as true. It may triumph at the bar of probable evidence. Granted; but common sense, as I understand common sense, is against it." This is something like what the Jew would have thought to himself, and his will would have carried the day against his intellect.—*Canon Liddon.*

#### XIX. HOMILETICAL APPLICATIONS.

1 The joyful comfort of the resurrection.

[13649] *The Lord is risen indeed!* Then God is a Father to you—for Christ revealed a Father, and showed how the Father receives returning prodigals. ♫ And as His resurrection seals the revelation, that revelation must be



true. *The Lord is risen indeed!* Then God loves you with a love which you cannot measure, for of such a love did the Saviour testify (John iii. 16). And the resurrection proves His testimony true. *The Lord is risen indeed!* Then your sins are put away, so that they cannot obstruct the flow of Divine love; for He came as the sin-bearer, and ere His death exclaimed, "It is finished!" And His resurrection attests that He has done all that He professed to do. *The Lord is risen indeed!* Then there is forgiveness for you. For He commanded His disciples to preach repentance and remission of sins in His name unto all nations. And His resurrection proves that He has power on earth to forgive sins. *The Lord is risen indeed!* Then there is life—eternal life in Him for you. He came that the world through Him might have life. He claimed to be the Resurrection and the Life, and promised eternal life to whomsoever should believe on Him. And by His rising from the dead His claims and promises are verified. The power which raised His body from the grave, to die no more, is able also to raise your mortal bodies, and to invest them with immortality. The entrance of humanity in His person into immortal life prepares the way for your entrance. For it is as your forerunner and representative that He has conquered death and ascended on high.—*Rev. Wm. Landels.*

## 2 The dreadful warning of the resurrection.

[13650] *The Lord is risen indeed!* Then woe unto those by whom His overtures of mercy are rejected and His authority set at naught. As the conqueror of death, no one can successfully resist His will. The power which rifled the grave can crush the proudest rebel. And the same all-conquering might which would have been employed to save, had His proffered mercy been accepted, will be employed to punish where that mercy has been despised. Those who would not listen when He said, "Come—him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out; I am come that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly," will be compelled both to listen and obey when He says, "Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity."—*Ibid.*

[13651] *The Lord is risen indeed!* Such is the message which comes to you from His empty grave—from His lofty throne—a gracious message to those who will receive it and submit to His authority, and accept of His salvation—a message fraught with warning and terror to every evildoer, who will not come to Him that he may have life. "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your day, a work which ye shall in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you!" God hath raised His Son Jesus Christ. He hath set His king upon His holy hill of Zion. The nations that oppose

Him He will rule with a rod of iron, and break in pieces as a potter's vessel. Be wise, therefore; be instructed. Worship the Son, lest He be angry with you, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Oh the blessedness of those who put their trust in Him!—*Ibid.*

## 3 The call of the resurrection to newness of life.

[13652] It is no use going and gazing at that broken tomb, crying out about resurrection power and glory, and then, like St. James's man, after having beheld our face in the glass, going our way, and straightway forgetting what manner of men we are. What manner of men are we? We are children of the resurrection. If we are really one with Jesus, we are lifted up out of the tomb together with Him into the newness of life which is represented yonder by our Head in glory. Just as the life in my own physical head permeates my whole physical system, so there is a real substantial unity of life between my Divine Head and me, if I am living in Him; so that I have no right to go away and forget what manner of man I am. When we get down to the exchange, to the workshop, do we forget what manner of men we are? Are there any of us who, when we get behind our counter, forget what manner of men we are? We remember it at the Lord's table, we commemorate the fact there, that we are bought with a price, that our position is in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. That is what manner of men we are in theory, in our moments of contemplation; but what about it when we come down from the Mount of Transfiguration, when the glories have for a moment disappeared, when the majesty of God is no longer engrossing our attention,—what manner of men are we then? Have we forgot it? Oh that we had better memories! Unbelief has a very short memory, but faith has a very long one; and the man who walks by faith cannot forget one thing—Christ in him, the hope of glory. That is the secret of resurrection life and power.—*Rev. W. Hay M. H. Aitken.*

[13653] God never gives us a call without its being a privilege; and He never gives us the privilege to come up higher without stretching out to us His hand to lift us up. . . . Come up higher and higher into the realities and glories of the resurrection life. . . . Shake yourself loose of every encumbrance, turn your back on every defilement, give yourself over like clay to the hand of the potter, that He may stamp upon you the fulness of His own resurrection glory, that we, beholding as in a mirror the glories of the Lord, may be changed from glory to glory.—*Ibid.*

[See Vol. I., "CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES," Section I.]

## PART IV.

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# RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

### DIVISION D. (*Continued*.)

#### [5] Christ's Triumphant Ascension and Exaltation.

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# RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(Continued).

## DIVISION D. (Continued.)

### 5

#### CHRIST'S TRIUMPHANT ASCENSION AND EXALTATION.

##### I. QUESTION AS TO THE OBJECT OR DESIGN OF OUR LORD'S REMAINING SO LONG ON EARTH AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

[13654] Why, if Christ's interviews with His followers were so few, His intercourse with them so brief, so broken, so reserved, did Jesus remain on earth so long? Why were so many as forty days of an existence such as His spent by Him in this way? It is scarcely possible for us to forget, or to fail in being struck by it, that this period of forty days was one which had already been signalized in the history of redemption. Was it as Elijah was carried away into the wilderness, to fast and pray there for forty days, to prepare him for his great work as the restorer of the Law in Israel? Was it as Jesus Himself, after His baptism, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, to fast there forty days, and at the end to be tempted of the devil, to fit Him for that earthly ministry which was to close in His death upon the cross? Was it even so that now, for another forty days, our Lord was detained on earth, as the suitable preface or prelude to His entrance upon that higher stage of the mediatorial work in which He is to sit upon the throne, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool?—*Rev. Wm. Hanna, D.D.*

[13655] Take the other alternative: that after His resurrection Christ had immediately resumed and continued—even let us say for no longer a time than these forty days—the exact kind of life that He had led before, returning to all His old haunts and occupations—would not such a return on His part to all the old familiarities of His former intercourse have had a tendency to check the rising faith in His Divinity; to tie His disciples down again to a knowing of Him only after the flesh; to give to the humanity of the Lord such bulk and prominence as to make it in their eyes overshadow the Divinity? Can you conceive a treatment more nicely fitted to the spiritual condition, to

the spiritual wants of those men at that time, than the very one which the Lord adopted and carried out,—so well fitted as it was, gradually, gently, without violence, to lead those disciples on from their first misty, imperfect, unworthy ideas of His person, character, and work, on and up to clearer, purer, loftier conceptions of Him? In what better way could a faith in their Master's Divinity have been superinduced upon their former faith in Him as a man, a friend, a brother, so that the two might blend together without damage done to either by the union; their knowledge of Him as human not interfering with their trust in Him as Divine; their faith in Him as God not weakening their attachment to Him as man?—*Ibid.*

##### II. SCENE OF THE ASCENSION.

1 The hallowed associations of the spot selected, and the true humanity of Christ evinced in the choice.

[13656] The place was Bethany. Why Bethany? He might have ascended from some other quarter of the Mount of Olives; why did He choose this one from which He at least could behold the village of Bethany, and it may be the very house of Martha and Mary? I know not what you may think, but I confess I see in this a new proof of His genuine humanity in an attachment to places—an attachment to some above others because of pleasing associations. In choosing Bethany—village or district, I care not which—as the scene of His departure, He showed Himself possessed of one of the deepest intuitions of our nature. If you had it in your option, where would you wish to leave the world?—on what objects would you like to look for the last time? Would it not be on the friends you loved best, the home that sheltered you, the flowers you planted, the scenes and haunts of childhood, the streams and mountains of your native land? It is said of the admirable Leighton, that he wished that the place of his departure might be an inn; he thought it most conformable to the character of a pilgrim; and, if my recollection serves me aright, he obtained his wish. I cannot but think it was a most unnatural one, partaking of an ascetic character, and to be accounted for only by the fact that

he had fallen on evil days, and felt so. I do not think that Christianity requires me to disown any of the ties of nature, or any of the promptings of the heart. I am sure this is not the mind of Christ—it is too morbid, too unnatural, too unnatural. On His heart were deeply engraven the beautiful lake of Galilee, and the retired village of Bethany; He visited both ere He left the world.—*Rev. A. L. R. Foote.*

[13657] In proportion as minds advance in intelligence, they are swayed by manifold considerations. And it may have been that He who knew all things, and whose procedure is influenced not by a part, but by the whole of His boundless knowledge, saw moral as well as natural fitness in the locality which He selected as the scene of that tender parting, and that triumphant ascension. His road led past, or through the Garden of Gethsemane, the scene of His frequent devotion, and of His greatest prostration and agony. Was it not fitted, and may it not have been designed, to connect these things in the minds of His disciples with His ascension?—to show them the glory to which a life of devotion would ultimately lead; and how the agony must precede the triumph—how we must drink the cup of suffering before we can drink the cup of blessedness; and pass through the valley of humiliation and trial before we can reach the mount of apotheosis and the throne and crown of glory? This is a truth which we greatly need, but are slow to learn.—*Rev. Wm. Lundels.*

[13658] Mount Olivet was the scene of previous prayer and sorrow, near Gethsemane and Bethany. Our Lord ascended not from Jerusalem, to be seen in public by the Jews; nor from Calvary, the place of the curse; but from Mount Olivet, the place of prayer and suffering.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

### III. INCIDENTS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE ASCENSION.

**I** "Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke xxiv. 45).

[13659] When He met with the eleven in the course of that day on which He was taken up into heaven, our Saviour occupied Himself with showing them how needful it was that all things that had been written in the law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms regarding Him should be fulfilled; with showing them how exactly many of their ancient prophecies had met with their fulfilment in the manner and circumstances of His death; with showing them how it behoved Him to suffer, and through suffering to reach the throne of that kingdom which He came to set up on the earth;—at once unfolding to them the Scriptures, and opening their minds to understand them. As on the first, so now on the last day of His being with them, this was the chosen theme on which He dwelt; this the lesson upon which a larger

amount of pains and care were bestowed by our Lord after His resurrection than upon any other.—*Rev. Wm. Hanna, D.D.*

[13660] Our Lord's exposition of the Scriptures after His resurrection could not have been wholly in vain. When, then, after all the fresh light He had thrown upon the true nature of His kingdom and the manner of its establishment, we find the apostles coming to Him and saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? it could scarcely be that, ignoring all they had just heard, and clinging still to their first belief, they were inquiring about an immediate erection of that temporal and visible kingdom which had previously so engrossed their thoughts and hopes. No; they saw now the need there was that Jesus should have suffered all these things; but still there was a kingdom which, through these sufferings, He was to reach, a glory on which, when these were over, he was to enter. Still there lay within these prophecies, which their minds had now been opened to understand, many a wonderful announcement of the part which Israel was to take in the erection and consolidation of the Redeemer's empire upon this earth.—*Ibid.*

**2** He . . . said unto them . . . that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations (Luke xxiv. 47).

[13661] They were to receive power from on high to execute that great mission upon which they were to be sent forth; that mission was to consist in their proclaiming everywhere repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus; and beginning at Jerusalem as the centre, they were to go forth, not as prophets of the future, but as witnesses of the past, witnesses for Christ, to carry the glad tidings abroad through all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Repentance, a turning from all evil, a turning with true and penitent spirit to God; remission of sins, the covering of all past transgression by an act of grace on the part of God; the remission of sins, offered in the name of Jesus, coming only, but coming directly, immediately, fully, in and through the name of Him who is the one all-prevalent Mediator between man and God—such was the burden of that simple message which, in parting from them, Jesus committed to His disciples to make known over all the earth.—*Ibid.*

### IV. NATURE OF THE PARTING BLESSING, AND ITS REVELATION OF CHRIST'S LOVE FOR HIS OWN.

[13662] "He blessed them." No one surely can fail to see how this reveals the heart of Jesus. You say at once, how suitable a close is this for His earthly sojourn; how thoroughly in keeping with His whole character and mission! The Son of the Blessed, He came to bless, and



it was His delight to scatter blessings on all around. Is it not a beautiful corroboration of this that the first word of His public teaching was this sweet one, Blessed? This was on a mountain too, you will remember—hence termed the Mount of Beatitudes. And as He began His ministry with blessing, so He ended it; His last words on earth breathed a beatific spirit; and the Mount of Ascension became the Mount of Beatitude! In regard to the precise *form* of this act, silence is preserved. Did He use the sublime benediction of the Old Testament Church, felt to be so suitable even under the new economy? “The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift upon thee the light of His countenance, and give thee peace!” He might have done it; I confess I see nothing improbable in this; for, after all, were they not His own words? Still, one rather inclines, I think, to the conclusion, that words specially adapted to the occasion—that of parting—were used; words of surpassing beauty and tenderness, no doubt, never to be forgotten by those who heard them. I own it requires an effort to resist a feeling of regret that they have not been left as a legacy to the Church in all ages. As for the nature of the act, I incline very much to this view of it, that it was not so much an *authoritative* act, commanding the blessing, nor a *mediatorial* act, meriting the blessing—though these are not excluded—but rather a paternal act, so to speak. I like to think of Him now surrounded by those eleven disciples, not merely as the great King and Priest of His Church, but also, and very specially, as a Father giving His farewell blessing to His family, now soon to see Him no more. “Having loved His own, He loved them to the end,” and I delight to see in this act of His a proof and manifestation of His unchanged and unchangeable affection.—*Rev. A. L. R. Foote.*

[13663] The God-Man is deeply moved at the present moment; specially the humanity is stirred to its lowest depths, and its sympathies and finer emotions awakened at the thought that the hour is come when these weak and defenceless ones are to be left behind in the world—and such a world! He will bless them once again—He has often done so before, but now it will be doubly sweet to them; and when their hearts are nerved for the crisis by the healing balm He has poured into them, He will ascend, and their last looks of Him, as with straining eyes they follow Him, shall be with still uplifted hands, love beaming in His countenance, and the words of blessing dying on His lips!—*Ibid.*

#### V. MANNER OF THE ASCENSION.

[13664] They are approaching Bethany. He stops; they gather round. He looks upon them; He lifts his hands; He begins to bless them. What love unutterable in that parting

look; what untold riches in that blessing! His hands are uplifted; His lips are engaged in blessing, when slowly He begins to rise: earth has lost her power to keep; the waiting, up-drawing heavens claim Him as their own. An attraction stronger than our globe is on Him, and declares its power. He rises; but still, as He floats upward through the yielding air, His eyes are bent on these up-looking men; His arms are stretched over them in the attitude of benediction, His voice is heard dying away in blessings as He ascends. Awe-struck, in silence they follow Him with straining eye-balls, as His body lessens to sight, in its retreat upward into that deep blue, till the commissioned cloud enfolds, cuts off all further vision, and closes the earthly and sensible communion between Jesus and His disciples. How simple, yet how sublime, how pathetic this parting! No disturbance of the elements, no chariot of fire, no escort of angels; nothing to disturb or distract the little company from whom He parts; nothing to the very last to break in upon that close and brotherly communion, which is continued so long as looking eye and listening ear can keep it up.—*Rev. Wm. Hanna, D.D.*

[13665] Elijah is translated; a chariot of fire and horses of fire are commissioned to snatch him away from the earth, and carry him to heaven; but our Lord is borne upward by His innate power; He is not translated, He ascends. He came from heaven, and He returns to heaven, as to His natural home. The wonder is, not that He should now at length *go* to heaven, but that He should so long have tarried upon earth. Calmly, majestically, He ascends, carrying with Him that body which He had redeemed from the grave. No fire-chariot is needed for Him. And why not? Because there is nothing of earthly dross requiring to be burnt out of Him, no wondrous transformation, no last baptism of cleansing fire before He can endure to pass into the presence of his Father; but such as He was upon earth, exactly such He passes into the heavens. No shock, no whirlwind, no violent rapture in His case; for in His ascension there is no breach of the laws of His natural life, but all is in exactest conformity with them.—*Abp. Trench.*

[13666] How gently and silently this great event appears to have taken place! It is supposed that the Saviour appeared to them first in the early morning; and that after some converse with them He led them out, so that the ascension, as became such an event, must have taken place about noonday. We have no hint that the disciples were looking for it. Indeed, from the surprise which they afterwards evinced, it would appear to have come upon them unexpectedly. In all probability they followed Him with no other expectation than that He was about to visit Bethany, as He had often done before. No crowd was summoned to witness an imposing spectacle. If the Jews saw Him walking at the head of His disciples through the streets or

suburbs of Jerusalem, the appearance of a man who was crucified six weeks before may have given rise to strange feelings and thoughts; but to none of them was any intimation given of the event which was to follow. And His own friends were no better informed. They went to witness the departure of a King for His throne—the ascent to the seat of universal dominion of One who had sojourned here in the form of a servant—a weak, persecuted, despised, and homeless man; and they knew not why they went. With elevated converse, we may suppose He engaged them on the way, and, thus lifting their minds heavenward, prepared them spiritually for beholding His entrance there. Pausing after they had crossed the mountain summit, and were close on Bethany, His lofty speech glided into gracious benediction. With uplifted hands He blessed them; and in the act of blessing, rose. In this quiet and unostentatious manner did our Saviour take His departure from this world. His exit was as noiseless—as little attended with pomp—as His entrance. He has finished the redemption of a world; He has vanquished the powers of hell; He has triumphed over death and the grave. And now, in this quiet and gentle manner, He retires from the scene of His marvellous achievements.—*Rev. Wm. Landels.*

## VI. EVIDENCES OF THE FACT.

[13667] The evidences of this fact were numerous. The disciples saw Him ascend (Acts i. 9, 10). Two angels testified that He did ascend (Acts i. 11). Stephen, Paul, and John saw Him in His ascended state (Acts vii. 55, 56; Rev. i.). The ascension was demonstrated by the descent of the Holy Ghost (John xvi. 7-14; Acts ii. 33); and the terrible overthrow and dispersal of the Jewish nation is still a standing proof of it (John viii. 21; Matt. xxvi. 64).—*Encyclopædia (Edwards).*

[13668] St. Luke's account of the ascension is full and graphic. We do not envy the man who can read it and doubt. Every line, every word, marks the eye-witness. The writer must have either seen it, or he must have heard it from one who had. The last conversation about the times and the seasons—the parting charge, to wait in Jerusalem—the renewed promise, of the power from on high—the very expression, “not many days hence”—the attitude and gesture of the departing Friend, who lifted up His hands to bless, and in that very act of benediction was parted from them—the words “while they beheld”—and, again, “while they looked steadfastly (gazed intently) into heaven as He went up”—above all, that most expressive clause, “A cloud received Him out of their sight”—I know not what good evidence is, if this be not; I know not what history will keep its credit if this must be set aside.—*C. J. Vaughan, D.D.*

## VII. TRIUMPH OF THE FACT.

[13669] All was still and quiet on Olivet's

Mount, as if only an ordinary being had passed away from the world; from first to last the world knew Him not, knew not that footsteps of its Creator had been in it. But it is not meet that such an event should pass unnoticed in the higher portions of God's universe. . . . It must have been a great day in heaven—that the return of the Son of God, . . . a jubilee day, a day of gladness, a day, shall we say, of deep amazement! for notwithstanding that His Divine nature invested Him with omnipresence, there was surely some deep sense in which He left the courts above.—*Rev. A. L. R. Foote.*

[13670] Could our eyes have penetrated the heavens into which the disciples gazed so earnestly—could we have resolved into its different parts the radiant cloud which received Him, we should have witnessed a very different spectacle from that which transpired on that quiet and secluded Judæan mountain. For if, when the corner-stone of the earth was laid, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy—if there be joy in the presence of the angels over the repentance of even one sinner, we may lawfully conclude that jubilant and triumphant acclamations must have greeted His ascent to His throne, and that through all the ranks of the glorified there must have been joyful celebrations when God's greatest work was done. In Psalm lxxviii., the twenty thousand chariots of God, even thousands of angels, are spoken of in immediate connection with Christ's ascension. And from this, as well as from the fact that at His return, which is to resemble His departure, He is to come in the glory of His Father, with all His holy angels with Him, we conclude, that these “chariots of God which are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels,” formed the bright cloud which received Him when He passed from the view of His disciples. . . . Then through the open gates, up the golden streets the triumphal procession sweeps, while all heaven rings with joyful acclamations, till the man who was crowned with thorns—the man who was spit upon and buffeted—the man who was scourged and crucified, takes His place at the right hand of the Majesty on high, henceforth to wear on that once thorn-crowned brow the diadem which becomes the Sovereign of all the worlds, and that nail-pierced hand to wield the rod of power—the sceptre of universal dominion.—*Rev. Wm. Landels.*

## VIII. THE SPECIAL PROMISES OF THE ASCENSION.

### I Before the event.

(1) *The promise of the Holy Ghost.*

a. “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, . . . the Father shall send in My name” (John xiv. 26).

[13671] The word in the original, of which *Comforter* is our translation, is “*παράκλητος*,” which may be rendered Advocate, Monitor, Counsellor, Intercessor, Comforter; and all of

these forcibly apply to the Holy Spirit sent by the Father and the Son. But I am inclined to believe that our translators, in adopting the interpretation which they have done in our version, have rendered the word in the signification most suitable to the context. The whole of this discourse of our Lord, in its purport and application, is encouraging and comforting to His people. "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people," seems to be the motto truly descriptive of its bearing and character. It opens with the cheering tone of assurance, "Let not your heart be troubled;" as it proceeds, it adds promise to promise, truth to truth, to guard as it were every avenue, by which grief or trouble might enter into the minds of His beloved disciples; and it closes with a declaration so full of comfort, so perfumed with the fragrance of heaven's consolation, as to be sufficient in itself to cause the wilderness to be as the garden of Eden to God's people. "These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."—*Rev. D. T. K. Drummond, B.A.*

[13672] A nearer and more gracious communication of the Holy Spirit's influence was to be vouchsafed to them. Hitherto He had been "dwelling with them." He dwelled without measure in Him who dwelled among them. "The Truth," and "the Spirit of Truth," were before them, in the person of Jesus their Lord; and from Him then personally, who went out and in before them, had they hitherto derived all their communications of grace; but henceforth they were to have a nearer and closer apprehension of His enlightening and comforting presence: "He shall be *in* you." When the Saviour departed, He was to leave in His temples on earth His Divine glory. The Holy Ghost was to make the hearts of His people His temple, and dwell in them in the unsearchable riches of His grace, the fulness of His love, and the perfection of His peace for ever.—*Ibid.*

[13673] Christ said that it was expedient that He should go away, and that if He did not go the Comforter would not come. Blessed word! And yet it is but a classification of the higher words, Holy Spirit. It is a blessed word because if there is anything that we need in this world, it is comforting. There are gods of love, there are gods of wine, there are gods of war, there are gods of lust, there are gods of cruelty, there are gods of government and law, there are gods of equity and justice, there are gods of abundance; but that which we need more than anything else is a God of motherhood, a God of patience, a God of gentleness, a God of forbearance, a God of forgiveness, a God of love in its fullest potency, a God that can brood, and wait, and help, and comfort while helping. And that word to me sounds like one sweet bell in a whole jangle of discordant bells.—*H. Ward Beecher.*

## 2 After the event.

### (1) *The promise of the second advent.*

a. "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11).

[13674] "As ye have seen a cloud receive Him, even so amidst the clouds of heaven shall He return; He shall come to you again visibly as the Son of Man who hath been crucified; and, it may be, shall descend on this very mount." "I will gather all nations into the valley of Jehoshaphat; . . . for there will I sit to judge." And He shall come to judge, says St. Augustine, in the very same form in which He was judged.—*Rev. Isaac Williams, B.D.*

[13675] "Why gaze ye up into heaven? This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." This is not a final departure of this Jesus from the world He came to save. That was not the last look the earth was ever to get of Him that you got of Him as the clouds covered Him from your view. He is to come again. But for this perhaps the disciples might have returned to Jerusalem with sad and downcast spirits. So vivid was the expectation cherished by the first Christians of the second advent of the Lord, that it needed to be chastened and restrained. They required to have their hearts directed into a patient waiting for that coming. It is very different with us. We require to have that faith quickened and stimulated, which they needed to have chastened and restrained. It is more with wonder than with great joy that we return from witnessing the ascension of our Lord. But let us remember that though the heavens have received Him, it is not to keep Him there apart for ever from this world. He Himself cherishes no such feeling of retirement and separation now that He has ascended up on high. What are the very last words that in vision He uttered: "He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly."—*Rev. Wm. Hanna, D.D.*

[13676] We stand midway between the two awful manifestations—the ascent to glory and the descent to judgment. Between the two epochs lies the history of the world! There are those—and they are men of deep thought in many instances—who believe that the second of these great events is not so far distant as the unbelieving world would gladly deem—who think that "the thief in the night" is already on his way, that "the good man of the house" had better set his watch and bar his doors. I enter not now into such calculations. Such expectations have often been held, and often deceived; but it is a miserable folly which would thence conclude that they can never be realized; and which, from the poor experience of a few hundred years undisturbed by miracle, would take occasion to ask, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were." It does, indeed,



seem to be a providential arrangement of God that at almost *all* periods the expectation of the coming should be preserved in the Church. Ages have, it is true, proved the fallacy of these immediate hopes; yet the hope itself "springs immortal" and still, with unrelenting earnestness, the brotherhood of Christ strain eye and ear to catch the distant gleaming of the advent light and the sound of the chariot-wheels. From their very failures they gain (and not unjustly) a ground of hope; for that which must at a definite (though unknown) period be accomplished, and has not yet been, must, in virtue of those very disappointments, and in proportion to their number, be judged the nearer.—*Rev. Wm. Archer Butler, M.A.*

[13677] Were we to judge by the analogy of the first advent of the same mighty Personage, we would expect an undefined anticipation, mingled with much disbelief, to herald His approach; as if the human heart felt itself beat quicker, it knew not why, at the approach of so tremendous an event; or as if all nature (like the pulseless calm that precedes an earthquake) silently owned a secret terror as the Creator again descended into His work! However the dispensations of God be arranged—and of that which the very angels of heaven know not, nor even the Son in His human and prophetic capacity, I dare not to pronounce—our path of practice is equally sure. If it is given you to believe that "to be absent from the body" is "to be present with the Lord," you will rejoice as sincerely to seek Him there as to await Him here.—*Ibid.*

#### IX. THE GLORIFICATION OF HUMANITY IN THE SUPREME EXALTATION OF THE GOD-MAN.

[13678] The ascension of the Lord was, as it were, the marriage between heaven and earth, the setting up of the mystic ladder (John i. 51). Christ's incarnation was the condescension of the Divine nature; Christ's ascension was the exaltation of the human nature.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13679] There are those who would insinuate that we are too diminutive a speck in the array of worlds, to claim, in the ascension of God into the highest heavens, the union of *our* interests with the counsels of Deity; that it is an unwarrantable arrogance to claim an exclusive right to the special favour of this universal God. But that which we assert—the glorification of our nature in the glorification of Christ—rests upon no such principle; it would not be diminished though shared with millions! The very immensity of Divine power, providence, and love, which alone forms a ground for the objection, suggests at once its solution.—*Rev. Wm. Archer Butler, M.A.*

[13680] How far the Redeemer has multiplied Himself in the work of redemption, I know not;

through how many desolate worlds He has sent a message of life, I know not. Whether the restored sinners of other orbs may also claim their own in that Infinite Essence, and talk of their Bethlehems and their Calvaries, their nativities and their ascensions, it would be vain to conjecture; and it cannot in one jot alter the reality of *our* eternal union with Him. For myself, I own no jealousies in the common happiness of races and of worlds. I believe the heart that beat at Gethsemane large enough to hold a universe in its love; and I should no more envy the redeemed of a distant planet than the redeemed of a distant continent.—*Ibid.*

[13681] It is the prerogative of a Divine affection that it can multiply through new thousands without abating to each; like the light of the sun which diminishes not to surrounding objects because you open to it the windows of a dark chamber till then unvisited by its radiance. I should rejoice to see that brow which bled beneath the thorns, crowned with the victories of ten thousand worlds! I should feel that it was with higher exultation and more assumed confidence I could answer to the cold question of the doubter, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" that He was, indeed, "the chiefest among ten thousand" (Song v. 9, 10). Nor should I approach Him with a more total and unmingled affection, with a more thorough devotedness, or a more exclusive confidence that I, the meanest of His creatures, enjoyed the fulness of His love, in the midst of this host of His adorers, or with less tenderness utter the exquisite expostulation of the repentant apostle, "Lord, Thou knowest all things!" and even in the midst of these innumerable worshippers from every region of creation, "Thou knowest that I love Thee!"—*Ibid.*

[13682] What ought to be our feelings, as we reflect upon this astonishing transit? How ought we to be animated; as we remember that a body, spiritual indeed, but yet tangible and visible—a nature immaculate indeed, but yet human and *ours*—has been uplifted by the energy of indwelling Godhead, and set in the centre of the Paradise of God? If this fact be believed, it is impossible it can leave us as it found us. It is a thing so surpassing in its importance, that no human spirit can receive it, and be unmoved. To hear this story of a common acquaintance, and to hear it on grounds that left its truth unquestionable, would occupy our every thought for hours, for days, with minds more reflective for a far longer period. But to know that it has happened mainly with a view to *our own* future exaltation; that it is but the prologue of a drama which is to take in the whole blessed company of the redeemed; that it is a preparatory measure which is to introduce an endless procession of future entrances like itself—saint after saint rising into the glory thus secured by this Captain of salvation, and each met at the threshold by Him who thus has



scaled the skies that He might be there before us!—to know this, and to believe it, is to awake to emotions that annihilate earth, and open heaven already to the exulting soul.—*Ibid.*

[13683] This ascension of Christ is the great pledge and proof of our eternal state; that our nature is for ever identified with His, so that as long as He is Man, we must be happy, as one with Him; that the great value of this transcendent fact is, not merely that it is an *example* of our future ascension, but that it is our ascension *begun*—we in Him having risen to heaven, we in Him being at this time present before God, we in Him being united with the eternal plans and procedures of heaven, so that we are for ever blended with Christ—His property, His purchased possession, the very members of His body; insomuch that they who succour His suffering disciples in this world shall be pronounced to succour Himself, and that Paul who persecuted the Church was said by the Church's Head to have persecuted "Christ."—*Ibid.*

#### X. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ASCENSION AS MARKING AN EPOCH IN THE CHURCH'S HISTORY.

- 1 It for ever terminated the visible, and finally established the spiritual as the law of God's dealing.

[13684] The ascension is an epoch. It is a stopping-point and a starting-point in the march of time. When the cloud intercepted Jesus as He went up, it bore witness to a great change and a great transition. Hitherto, amidst all the protests of conscience and prophecy against resting in the visible, God had always had upon earth a visible presence. He had had a place where He set His name. Even the flaming sword which guarded Paradise Lost was a visible token of God's presence. The patriarch's altar, built here, built there, as he journeyed along a land not his, was an allowed, if not prescribed, token to him of a manifested Presence. When the tabernacle was reared, according to a pattern shown in detail, and in each bolt and partition significant—when its removal and its resting was the signal, day by day, of a nation's march and a nation's halt; when an elaborate ritual, prodigal of costly offering and even of animal life, was made the centre of Israel's life, domestic, social, political, ecclesiastical; when even the "Desire of all nations," coming to mankind, came first and primarily to God's temple—then most of all was it seen that God laid stress upon the material, that He was still teaching by elements and rudiments, still making men learn that He is, before He goes on to teach the higher truth, that He is a Spirit, spiritually alone worshipped. Even the presence of Christ upon earth was the presence of the carnal. The Word made flesh, tabernacled amongst us in a body.—*Dean Vaughan.*

[13685] The ascension was the turning-point. . . . We speak not in disparagement of a seemly and beautiful worship offered still in temples made with hands. Such worship has been in all ages the garment and the vehicle of the saints' communion with God. Nevertheless, this experience is in exact proportion to the spirituality of the devotion; and where the worship has not been offered on the faith of the ascension, there God has seen nothing but an empty show, heard nothing but a babbling sound, offensive to Himself and not acceptable.—*Ibid.*

[13686] Through the aid of imagination men gain much more comprehensive and satisfying views of the invisible God than they could get of Him through the senses if He were visible before them. Idolatry, the worship of a visible God, has always been bad, whether the idol was in the shape of a grotesque stone, or whether it was in the shape of a rare Apollo, or whether it was in the shape of a church, or whether it was in the shape of a creed. Any god that men can fix their lower senses upon, and rest, is bad for the race.—*H. Ward Beecher.*

[13687] The necessity of men to lift themselves above their lower range of faculties, and make their life in the realm of the invisible, out of the reach of the senses, and develop their nature up and away from the physical and material—that is the grand civilizing and Christianizing necessity of the race. And to have our Saviour present with us would be to smother those instincts on which our elevation and spiritualization depend; while to have Him absent from us in heaven is to have above us a bright flame like a blaze of fire, circuiting higher and higher to where Christ sits at the right hand of God.—*Ibid.*

#### XI. EXPEDIENCY OF THE ASCENSION.

- 1 It was expedient as an assurance to man of future glory in admittance to heaven.

[13688] Jesus Christ is gone to heaven, as one legally authorized to take possession of heaven in our stead, so as that possession of it which he takes shall be in law reckoned as if we ourselves had taken it.—*T. Goodwin, D.D., 1600-1679.*

[13689] It is sufficiently easy to certify ourselves of the indispensableness of the resurrection; for we see at once the force of the distinction drawn by St. Paul, that Christ was "delivered for our offences," but "raised again for our justification." But it is quite another thing to certify ourselves of the indispensableness of the ascension; for, when our justification had been completed, might not the risen Mediator have remained with the Church, gladdening it perpetually by the light of His presence? To this we reply, that the reception of our nature, in the person of our surety, into heavenly places, was as necessary to our com-

fort and assurance as its deliverance from the power of the grave.—*Canon Melvill.*

[13690] As originally created, man moved in the immediate presence of God; and the state, from which he fell, was one of direct intercourse and blissful communion with his Maker. And Christ had undertaken to counteract the effects of apostasy; as the second Adam, He engaged to place human nature in the very position from which it had been withdrawn by the first. But was there any demonstration that such undertaking, such engagement, had been fully performed, until Christ ascended up to heaven, and entered, as a man, into the holy place? So long as He remained on earth, there was no evidence that He had won for our nature re-admission to the paradise from which it had been exiled.—*Ibid.*

**2 It was expedient for the universal diffusion of Christ's spiritual presence.**

[13691] So long as a lamp in a room is placed on a low level, its light may be intercepted by the bodies of persons around it, and so prevented from reaching others who are in the remoter corners. But let it be lifted up to the ceiling, and it sheds its beams down on all who are below. Our Lord, while on earth, was circumscribed by place and by earthly relationships; but now, since His ascension, His presence and influence are diffused abroad everywhere through the spiritual world, as the rays of the sun are through the natural.—*H. Goulburn.*

[13692] It was expedient that Jesus should return to the heavenly estate, to the spiritual realm, in order that the imagination of the whole human family, now instructed by some historical metes and bounds, might be put in possession of definite facts, of the materials that were authoritative, and of the generic ideal or conception called *Christ*. Having ascended to heaven, He could really be nearer, through the imagination, to the race than He could have been if He had remained in Jerusalem. That is a far-off land, and if Christ were alive there to-day I should think of Him by my lower faculties; and connected with my thoughts of Him would be thoughts of leagues, of days, and of travelling by land and by sea. He is nearer to me now than He would be if He were in Jerusalem.—*H. Ward Beecher.*

[13693] Christ's ascension is, in the first place, the complement of His resurrection. It was not enough that He should rise from the dead and walk this earth again. He must show that not earth, but heaven, is His home, and the centre to which He is irresistibly drawn. He must take His place as the Universal Bishop, the Bishop of all souls; no longer the Shepherd of one little flock in Judæa, but the Great Shepherd of the sheep gathered in from many flocks into a wider fold. Christ's ascension enables you to regard Him as the King of

Glory, Head over all things in the Church, and as such having received gifts for men.—*Abp. Trench.*

**3 It was expedient that the ascension of Christ on high should be the means of the Holy Spirit's agency on earth.**

[13694] We are bound, in considering what reasons there may be to ourselves for rejoicing in the exaltation of Christ, to assume that this exaltation was indispensable to the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and to His presence with the Church to expound and carry home the gospel. Of what avail would it have been to us, that the Son had humbled Himself, and wrestled, and died, on our behalf, had the Spirit not been given as a regenerating agent, to make effectual, in our own cases, what had been wrought out by Christ? Who but this Spirit enabled apostles to combat the idolatries of the world, and gain a footing for Christianity on the earth? Who but this Spirit guided the pens of sacred historians, that distant ages might possess the precious record of the sayings and doings of the Redeemer? Who but this Spirit now makes the Bible intelligible, throwing on its pages supernatural light, so that they burn and glow with the truths of eternity? Who but this Spirit convinces man of sin, produces in him that "godly sorrow" which "worketh repentance," and leads to the putting faith in the alone propitiation? Who but this Spirit gradually withdraws the affections from what is perishable, animates by setting before the view the prizes of heaven, and so sanctifies fallen beings that they become meet for the unfading inheritance? Who but this Spirit comforts the mourning, confirms the wavering, directs the doubting, sustains the dying? The office of the Son may indeed be more ostensible; it may more easily commend itself to our attention, because discharged in the form of a man; but he can know little of vital, practical Christianity who supposes it more important than that of the Spirit. What the Son did for us was valuable, because to be followed by what the Spirit does; take away the agency of the Third Person, and we are scarce benefitted by the agony of the Second.—*Canon Melvill.*

**4 It was expedient as a testimony of Divinity.**

[13695] To us it seems, that, under such a dispensation as the present, the continued residence of the Mediator upon earth would practically be regarded as contradicting His divinity. The question would perpetually be asked, whether this being could indeed be essentially Divine, who was left, century after century, in a state of humiliation? for it must be humiliation for Deity to dwell in human form on this earth, so long at least as it is the home of wickedness and misery. And it would be nothing against this, that He was arrayed with surpassing majesty, and continually exhibited demonstrations of supremacy. The majesty, which moreover could only be seen by few at one time,

would cease to dazzle when it had been often beheld ; and the demonstrations of supremacy would lose their power after frequent repetition. We think that the common feelings of our nature warrant our being sure that there would be immense difficulty in persuading a congregation, like the present, to kneel down and worship as God a being of whom they were told that He was dwelling as a man in Jerusalem, or some other city of the earth. And then we are to remember that, even if His essential Deity had been manifested to men, He must probably have been withdrawn from other ranks of intelligence : for would it not almost imply a separation, which cannot take place, of His divinity from His humanity, to suppose Him personally discovering His uncreated splendours in other parts of the universe, whilst He still dwelt in a body where He had suffered and died ? So, then, we cannot well see how there could have been the thorough manifestation of the divinity of the Son, which had been almost hidden under earlier dispensations, had not Christ ascended up on high, and taken His seat at the right hand of the Father.—*Ibid.*

## XII. ITS OBSERVANCE AS A FESTIVAL BY THE CHURCH.

[13696] The festival of the ascension dates from the primitive age of the Church, and St. Augustine attributes its institution to the apostles. Several of the Fathers of the same age have left sermons preached on the day, and Proclus, Patriarch of Constantinople, speaks of it as one of the days which the Lord Himself has made by the acts with which He has consecrated it.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

## XIII. STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE IN THE FOURTH ARTICLE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

[13697] The Fourth Article of the Church of England, and of the Protestant Episcopal Church, runs thus : "Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again His body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until He return to judge all men at the last day." The corresponding Article of the Methodist Episcopal Church is the same, omitting the words, "with flesh and bones," an omission which does not affect the substance of the Article. Browne's note on this Article is as follows : "It is clear (from the account in the Gospel) that our Lord's body, after He rose from the grave, was that body in which He was buried, having hands and feet, and flesh and bones, capable of being handled, and in which He spoke, and ate, and drank (Luke xxiv. 42, 43). . . . In that body which the disciples felt and handled, they saw our Lord ascend into heaven, . . . and thus the language used in the Article of our Church is fully justified. But because we maintain that

the body of Christ, even after His resurrection and ascension, is a true human body (to deny which would be to deny the important truth that Christ is still perfect Man as well as perfect God), it by no means, therefore, follows that we should deny that His risen body is now a glorified, and, as St. Paul calls it, a spiritual body.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards).*

[13698] The materials which we possess for forming a conception of the risen Saviour's body are scanty, and not easy of adjustment. All the accounts convey the impression that He rose, not only with a real, but with the same body which had been laid in the grave. With a real body, for on His first appearance to His disciples He set at rest their doubts as to His being a spirit by tangible proof of His possessing "flesh and bones" (Luke xxiv. 39-43). With the same body, for He showed them the print of the nails and of the spear (John xx. 27). Yet it is also evident that the resurrection-body possessed a dominion over space and matter which did not previously belong to it, or which Jesus did not choose to exercise. He passed through closed doors (John xx. 19), and though He partook of food it does not appear that He was compelled to do so by the necessities of nature. The miracle of the ascension was an infringement of the law of gravity. The resurrection-body, in short, was not a natural, but a spiritual one (1 Cor. xv. 44). Was this change accomplished at once in all its perfection when He rose ; or did it advance by gradual stages until the time when He was taken up ? The latter supposition seems the more probable. The Saviour rose with an essentially glorified body ; but this is not inconsistent with His having passed from one degree of glory to another, until, the process being complete, He ascended to heaven.—*E. A. Litton, M.A.*

## XIV. THE GREAT LESSONS OF THE ASCENSION.

- 1 It teaches that Christ, though so highly exalted, has still sympathy with the human nature in which He ascended.

[13699] "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"—"who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on those who are out of the way ?" He has fellow-feeling with us, for He knows by experience our frailty and our temptations ; and though now ascended on high, He retains the memory of them still. The nature He wears is a perpetual memorial of His relation to us, and of all He has endured and accomplished on our behalf. He remembers all His sufferings and privations as we cannot remember ours. Happily for us, while we have a vivid remembrance of pleasures, and can, by the aid of memory, do much to revive them, we have but a dim recollection of pains, and cannot, with all our efforts, very distinctly recall them. But not so is it with Christ.



"Our fellow-sufferer yet retains  
A fellow-feeling of our pains ;  
And still remembers in the skies,  
His tears, His agonies, and cries."

Never can He forget the scenes of His life and death. Never will He forget the experiences of Nazareth—the poverty of His boyhood and youth—the toil in the carpenter's shed—what He had to endure from the prejudices of His kinsmen and townfolk. Never will He forget the wilderness, with its fasting, and hunger, and temptation.—*Rev. Wm. Landels.*

**2 It teaches confidence in prayer to One who, though perfect God, is also perfect Man.**

[13700] When He ascended on high He received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. There is nothing we need to have done which He cannot do for us ; nothing good for us which He cannot give. And He is as willing as He is able. He is our sympathizing Brother, though He be King of kings and Lord of lords. He is linked to us by tenderest ties, though exalted above angels, and principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion. His mighty arm is allied to a loving heart. He died for us that He might be able to bless us. His exaltation is the consequence of His having humbled Himself on our account. He is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, because for us He endured the cross and despised the shame. He is invested with universal dominion—where every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess, because He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant. He is crowned with glory and honour, because He was made a little lower than the angels, that by the grace of God He might taste death for every man.—*Ibid.*

[13701] Who has not felt his heart drawn out to God by the assurance that One who was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin, is so near the throne, and has such influence there? I cannot go and find Him absent ; He is always there—still, as on earth, about the work given Him to do ! It is not enough that I am told of something called a right of access—an open door—a way into the holiest of all. I fear to look within, for it is the most holy place, and the thrice holy One dwells there, and guilt paralyses me, and conjures up a thousand images of terror. Is there no one to take me by the hand, and introduce me into this awful presence-chamber, and intercede for me, and put strength into my frame, and words into my mouth? Oh, yes ; there is the High Priest over God's own house ; I see Him, I see Him ; I know Him by the place He occupies, nearest to the throne ; I know Him by the mercy that beams in His eye ; I know Him by the wound in His side, and the print of the nails on His hands and feet. Yes ;

there is the High Priest—the ascended Jesus—the glorified Saviour—the same loving One that blessed His own eighteen hundred years ago on the Mount of Olives—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever !—*Rev. A. L. R. Foote.*

**3 It teaches thankfulness for the privileges we enjoy in the exaltation of the Incarnate Son.**

[13702] Let us, instead of indulging in morbid lamentations over the Saviour's absence, rejoice that He is exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and is ready to hear, and able to grant our requests, while at the same time He is spiritually ever with us. And while, on higher grounds than any carnal craving, we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly," let us avoid all idle calculations, remembering the rebuke which the Lord addressed to His disciples, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power."—*Rev. Wm. Landels.*

**XV. ITS OLD TESTAMENT TYPES.**

[13703] Here was the ark of God ascending up into the Holy City, to appear before God in Mount Zion : here the true David ascends into His own City, leading captivity captive ; here was the true High Priest, entering, once for all, into the Holy of Holies, to intercede for us : here was Noah, on the fortieth day—"on the self-same day"—entering into the ark. Thus of Enoch it is said, he prophesied that God should come "with ten thousand of His saints ;" and he "walked with God ;" and he was not, for God took him." Thus Moses left his people, and ascended the Mount to be alone with God ; and he also, even in death, was not found : so Elijah, also, was carried up to heaven with a chariot and horses of fire, Moses exhibiting Him, who enters alone into the Heaven of heavens, to intercede with God for His people ; while the fiery chariot of Elijah sets forth the triumph and victory of Him who led captivity captive ; who shall baptize with fire ; borne Himself to heaven on the fiery trial of affliction, which had no power on Him, but was his chariot to heaven ;—both seen with Him on the Mount in wonderful approaches to His glorified body, speaking of His departure, and partaking of His glory. And what if these figures contain shadows of future prophecy also? Moses was sent down from the Mount because the people had corrupted themselves, and Aaron himself had fallen away ; Elijah came down from the Mount Horeb to destroy the priests of Baal : and Christ, when He came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, finds His own disciples had lost faith, and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" And when the Son of Man shall return on the Last Day, He shall scarce find faith upon earth ; and the love of many shall have waxed cold.—*Rev. Isaac Williams, B.D.*



# XVI. DIFFICULTIES CONNECTED WITH THE STATEMENTS OF THE EVANGELISTS RESPECTING THE ASCENSION.

[13704] Matthew does not say that Jesus ascended into heaven after His resurrection, but closes his Gospel with the departure of the eleven from Jerusalem to Galilee, where Jesus met them at the mountain, as He had appointed them. There, as it would seem, He gave them the commission to go and teach all nations, promising to be with them to the end of the world. But the assertion that this was the final interview, and these the last words of Jesus to His apostles, and therefore that the ascension was from Galilee, is without proof. Here, as often, the brevity of our evangelist must be complemented by the fuller narratives of the others. Had we the account of Matthew only, we could not know that Jesus ascended from the mountain in Galilee, since he does not mention the ascension at all. But as he was not ignorant of the fact, so he could not have been of the time and place. The narrative of Mark (chap. xvi. 14-20) presents greater difficulties. He records the command of the Lord to go into all the world and preach the gospel, and the promise that certain signs should follow them that believe. From the connection in which His words stand, it would seem that they were spoken to the eleven as they sat at meat on the evening of the day of the resurrection, and that immediately after He ascended into heaven. This, however, is wholly irreconcilable with the statements of Luke. Some of the solutions that have been proposed are—1. That which takes Mark's narrative as strictly chronological, and makes the Lord's words to have been spoken to the eleven on the evening of the day of the resurrection, and His ascension to have immediately followed. This is affirmed by those who, as Kinkel and Jones, maintain that He repeatedly ascended to heaven, and, indeed, that He departed thither after each appearance to His disciples. The ascension on the fortieth day (Acts i. 9) was the last, and as such visible, and marked with especial solemnity. This view of several ascensions may remove some difficulties, but involves others greater, both historical and dogmatic. Others affirm, as Meyer and Alford, that Mark, intending to relate what took place at one and the same time, brings together here by mistake what really took place on several distinct occasions. Taking this view, of course the writer, whether Mark or some one else, could have known nothing of the several appearances of Jesus during the forty days, of the ascension from Bethany, or of the ten days' waiting for the Spirit ere the disciples began to preach. The supposition of such ignorance itself presents a greater difficulty than that it is intended to remove. 2. That which makes Jesus to have spoken these words to the eleven on the evening of the day of the resurrection, but defers the ascension itself to the fortieth day following. In this case the phrase *μετα το λαλησαι*, "After the Lord had spoken to them"

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(Mark xvi. 19), is not to be confined to the few words just recorded, but embraces His discourses in general, down to the time He ascended. 3. That which places His interview with the eleven on the evening of the day of the resurrection (ver. 14), but the words following upon some subsequent occasion, perhaps upon the mount in Galilee; and the ascension at a still later period. 4. That which makes this interview with the eleven to have been after the return of Jesus and the disciples from Galilee to Jerusalem, and immediately before the ascension at Bethany. The obvious and natural interpretation of the narrative is this: The evangelist, wishing to give in the briefest way the substance of the Lord's missionary commission to the Church, with its accompanying promises, connects it with a meeting of the eleven apostles, which may have been on the evening of the day of the resurrection, or more probably at some subsequent period. All the instructions of the forty days upon this point are summed up in these few words. In the same concise way it is said, that after the Lord had spoken to them, or after He had finished His instructions, He was received up. To press this brevity as indicating ignorance on his part of the real order of events, is hypocritical.—*Rev. Wm. Andrews, M.A.*

[13705] Substantially the same difficulties meet us in the narrative of Luke as in that of Mark. In his Gospel (chap. xxiv. 33-51) he seems to represent the ascension as taking place the evening after Jesus rose from the dead. He meets the eleven and others as they were gathered together, and after convincing them that He was really risen, by eating before them, and discoursing to them, He leads them out to Bethany, and, blessing them, is carried up into heaven. In the Acts of the Apostles, however, the evangelist states explicitly that He was seen of them forty days, and full details respecting His ascension at the end of this period are given. Do these two accounts conflict with each other? This is affirmed by Meyer. According to him, there were two traditions, one of which represented the Lord as ascending upon the day of the resurrection; the other, after forty days. In his Gospel, Luke follows the former; in the Acts, the latter. With Meyer, Alford agrees. "Luke, at the time of writing his gospel, was not aware of any Galilean appearances of the Lord, nor indeed of any later than this one. That he corrects this in Acts i. shows him to have become acquainted with some other sources of information, not, however, perhaps, including the Galilean appearances." All this is arbitrary conjecture. There is not the slightest hint that the evangelist wished to correct in the later account an error in the earlier. Had he made so gross a mistake, common honesty toward his readers would have demanded an explicit statement of it and a retraction. On the contrary, he says that his former treatise embraced all that Jesus did and taught "until the day on which He was taken

up," which day, as he says, was the fortieth after His resurrection. This is a plain avowment that in His Gospel He placed the ascension on the fortieth day, although he did not then give any specific designation of time. But it is plain that he cannot speak of an ascension upon the evening of the day when Jesus arose. The day was far spent when He was with the two disciples at Emmaus, and they returned to Jerusalem, and probably were some time with the eleven ere Jesus joined them. Some time passed in convincing them of His actual resurrection, and in discoursing to them. It must, therefore, have been late in the evening ere He led them out to Bethany, two miles distant, and the ascension itself must have been in the dead of night. This is intrinsically improbable, or rather incredible.—*Ibid.*

[13706] Comparing the several evangelists, we find that the Lord, during the forty days, first manifested Himself to His disciples in Judæa, and, going thence to Galilee, returned again to Judæa. So far as we can learn, it was not His purpose to have shown Himself to them in Jerusalem, for He had commanded them to go into Galilee, and there they should see Him. But their unbelief in His words respecting His resurrection made it necessary that He should manifest Himself to them there; yet even after they had seen Him, the unbelief of one seems to have detained them some days at Jerusalem. As in Galilee He had gathered His disciples, so here He appoints a place of general meeting. But He cannot ascend to His Father from Galilee. As He went up to Jerusalem to die, He now goes up thither again, that from the Mount of Olives, overlooking the Holy City and the temple, He may ascend to His Father's right hand to receive the kingdom, and to await the hour when His enemies shall be made His footstool, and the Lord shall be King over all the earth.—*Ibid.*

XVII. THE STRIKING BEAUTY IN THE DESCRIPTION IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE (CHAP. XXXIV. 50 TO END).

[13707] I believe no one can read these verses unmoved. They are characterized by that union of dignity with simplicity which I think is to be found nowhere so frequently exemplified as in the Bible. At first, perhaps, you are rather disappointed; you feel as if the scene were somewhat tamely represented; you think such an incident might have called forth more of what you would call eloquence; you could wish that the evangelist had introduced more *imagery*—the form of our ascending Lord—the cleaving air—the cloud-chariot; nay, that he had further gratified your fancy by giving you a glimpse behind that cloud—the angelic escort—the opening of heaven's gates—the celestial welcome—the return of the Son to the Father's bosom—the sitting down on the right hand of the throne—the homage of the heavenly host to the God-Man! But this is only a first and

hasty impression; as you dwell on it in *spiritual* thought, you begin to feel how much more touching is this simple and subdued picture than the one you desired. And not only so, but how much more suitable it is to the event itself, which has an inherent greatness that raises it above the aid of extrinsic ornament. You find out, too, that it bears to be read all the oftener that there is no straining after effect, and that, even as far as imagination is concerned, there is more room left for its exercise in the very indefiniteness and mysteriousness in which the event itself is left enveloped.—*Rev. A. L. R. Foote.*

[13708] The most interesting and, so to speak, salient points of the incident have been laid hold of with all the power of a master. Only mark how everything is touching—most touching—going right to the heart, and suggesting deep thoughts: the *place*—"Bethany," beloved Bethany! the *attitude*—"He lifted up His hands;" the *act*—"He blessed them;" the *moment of departure*—"while He blessed them;" the *rapture*—"He was carried up into heaven;" the *homage*—"they worshipped Him;" the *return*—"with great joy"—"praising and blessing God."—*Ibid.*

XVIII. THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE ASCENT AND THE DESCENT OF CHRIST.

[13709] He returns to heaven, but not as He left it. He came forth in His own pure spirituality, He returns clothed with a human form; He came forth the Logos, He returns the Theanthropos. Great and marvellous change! And now, as we meditate on this, are not two questions suggested? This first—What must have been the feelings of the inhabitants of heaven—angelic and human—on witnessing for the first time the God-Man? Especially the first of these. Did any feeling of envy arise in their breasts at the elevation of *our* race above theirs? Did they willingly bow before this new object of worship—or rather, I ought to say, the object of worship presented in this new aspect? We know they did, for all envy had been banished from heaven in the persons of the devil and his angels. Still, who can doubt that their feelings must have been very peculiar—new and unwonted; feelings of admiration and joy beyond what even they had ever experienced! And as for the latter—to see their brother seated on the throne, and bearing the sceptre of universal sway—to feel that they could still claim kindred with Him—we dare not venture to speak on such a theme; but we shall know it all if we are "numbered with the saints in glory everlasting." There is still another question—one is afraid to entertain it, but it always comes back upon us—What were the feelings of the humanity at the moment of elevation to the Father's right hand? For the humanity was not deified; the human nature remained, still remains substantially unaltered; glorified indeed

[13709—13712]

[CHRIST'S TRIUMPHANT ASCENSION AND EXALTATION.]

—immensely, ineffably, immeasurably glorified—but still the same. It was an amazing advancement! It is all a mystery to us; and we must not presume to bring our earthly conceptions to bear on such a subject; still, it *is* a wonder to us now, and will remain so to all eternity, that “the very nature itself which He took on Him in this world is exalted into glory; that this nature is filled with all the Divine graces and perfections whereof a limited, created nature is capable; that it is exalted above the glory of men and angels; that it is incomprehensibly nearer God than them all; hath communications from God, in glorious light, love, and power, ineffably above them all; but is still a creature.” These are the weighty words of Owen.—*Rev. A. L. R. Foote.*

### XIX. HOMILETICAL HINTS.

- 1 The ascension should not be viewed merely as a chronological event, but must be taken into the heart and life for comfort and strength.

[13710] When a man's heart is crushed within him by the galling tyranny of sense; when, from the dawning of the day till the setting of the sun, and for hours beyond it, he is compelled to gather straw for Egypt's bricks, and to bake them in the world's scorching kiln, till the spring of life is dried up within, and he is ready to say, Let me but eat and drink and sleep, for there is nothing real but this endless task-work; then, how sweet to say to oneself, “And a cloud received Him out of their sight.” Yes, just out of sight, but as certainly as if the eye could pierce it, there is a heaven all bright, all pure, all real; there is One there who has my very nature, in it toiled as ceaselessly as the most careworn and world-laden of us all, having no home, and no leisure so much as to eat. He is there—His warfare accomplished, His life's labour fulfilled; He is there at rest, yet still working, working

for me, bearing me upon His heart, feeling for and feeling with me in each trial and in each temptation; and not feeling only, but praying too, with that intercession which is not only near but inside God; and not interceding only, but also ministering grace hour by hour, coming into me with that very thought and recollection of good, that exact resolution and purpose and aspiration, which is needed to keep me brave and to keep me pure. Only let my heart be fully set to maintain that connection, that spiritual marriage and union, which is between Christ above and the soul below; only let me cherish, by prayer and watching, that spirit of soberness, that freedom from the intoxications of sense, which makes a man in the world and yet not of it—and I, too, shall at last reach that blessed home where Christ already is, and is for me!—*Dean Vaughan.*

[13711] We ought thither to ascend in heart, where we believe Christ to have in body ascended. Let us flee earthly desires; let us, who have a Father in heaven, take henceforth no delight in things below. And this is exceedingly to be considered by us, that He who hath ascended in meekness, will return in terror; and whatsoever He hath with gentleness enjoined us, He will exact with severity. Let no one, therefore, lightly regard the time He has granted for repentance; let no one neglect to take care of himself while he is able, for our Redeemer will then come unto judgment with strictness, in proportion to the long-suffering which He has shown before that judgment.—*St. Gregory.*

[13712] Lo, we have heard that the Lord hath ascended to heaven, let us hold this which we believe in continual meditation, and if, from the infirmity of the body, we are still detained here below, yet with steps of love let us follow Him. He who hath given unto us this desire forsaketh us not.—*Ibid.*



## PART IV.

# RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

### DIVISION D. (*Continued*.)

#### [6] Christ's Mediatorial Intercession.

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# RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(Continued).

## DIVISION D. (Continued.)

### 6

#### CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL INTER- CESSION.

##### I. MEANING OF THE WORD MEDIATOR.

[13713] The word "Mediator" does not occur at all in the Authorized Version of the Old Testament, and only occurs six times in the New Testament. In all of these it is represented in the original by the same Greek word (*μεσίτης*), which also itself is to be found in no other passage of the New Testament. This word is rather rare in classical Greek. Its meaning, however, it is not difficult to determine. This seems evidently to be *qui medio inter duo stat*—he who takes a middle position between two parties, and principally with the view of removing their differences.—*Rev. Thos. Scott, M.A.*

[13714] The word "Mediator" is used in the New Testament in a twofold sense—that of a peacemaker between two parties at variance (1 Tim. ii. 5), and that of the founder of a religious polity, as when the Mosaic dispensation is said to have been given by the hand of a Mediator (Gal. iii. 19); and in both it is applicable to Christ.—*E. A. Litton.*

##### II. NATURE OF A MEDIATOR, AND THE ANTIQUITY OF ITS IDEA.

[13715] A mediator is a person that intercedes between two parties at variance, in order to reconcile them. Thus Jesus Christ is the Mediator between an offended God and sinful man (1 Tim. ii. 5). Both Jews and Gentiles have a notion of a Mediator: the Jews call the Messiah *Amezoa*, the Mediator or Middle One. The Persians call their god Mithras, *Mesitēs*, a mediator, and the demons with the heathens, seem to be, according to them, mediators between the superior gods and men. Indeed, the whole religion of paganism was a system of mediation and intercession. The idea, therefore, of salvation by a Mediator is not so novel and restricted as some imagine; and the Scriptures of truth inform us that it is only by this way human beings can arrive at eternal felicity.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards).*

##### III. THE NECESSITY FOR MEDIATION.

I On account of the separation produced by sin between God and man.

[13716] The necessity for mediation arose from the effects of Adam's fall. Man, as originally constituted, was fitted to be the mediator between God and all created things. Although his body was derived from the dust of the earth, he had a higher nature inbreathed by God Himself, a reasonable soul. This was the seat of conscience and reason, of wisdom and invention. But superadded to this was the Divine *πνεῦμα*, by which man was made partaker of the nature of God. It was the possession of this *πνεῦμα* which was the connecting link between God and man. Through it Divine graces flowed into the human nature, and man was enabled to approach God, as our first parents were accustomed to do, when He walked in the garden in the cool of the day. They required then no mediator between their Maker and themselves, since by the indwelling presence of the Divine *πνεῦμα*, the breath of life, man was himself a mediator. But in the day he sinned he died, for he forfeited the Divine *πνεῦμα*, and therefore our first parents hid themselves from God's presence, because they had now need of a mediator. This need and its partial supply was set forth in all the ordinances of old.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13717] "The Mediator;" not *a* mediator, but *the, that* Mediator, that only one (1 Tim. ii. 5). God was angry, man was guilty; Christ is the Mediator betwixt them; who, being God, could satisfy God, and being man, could suffer for man. We are lost, and desire something to recover us: what shall that be? Mercy? No, God is just: he that hath offended must be punished. Shall it be justice? No, we have need of mercy, that he who hath offended might be spared. Here, to be so merciful as not to wrong his justice, to be so just as not to forget his mercy, there must be a mediator. This must not be the world—that was God's own before. He made it; not angels, for they are engaged for their own creation, and being finite, cannot satisfy an infinite majesty for infinite sins. God's Son must do it. Now,

if He come to satisfy for pride, He must put on humility; if for rebellion, He must put on obedience; if for stubbornness, He must put on patience; He must serve, if He will deserve; this God alone cannot do. If to die, He must be mortal; this only God cannot be. Therefore this Mediator is made man, to be Himself bound; so He is God, to free others that are bound. Man to become weak, God to vanquish. Man to die, God to triumph over death. This is that sacred ladder whose top in heaven, reaching to the bosom of God, expresseth His divinity; and his foot on earth, close to Jacob's loins, witnesseth His humanity. We are bankrupt debtors, God is a sure creditor; Christ sets all on His score. We are ignorant clients, God is a skilful Judge, Christ is our Advocate to plead our cause for us. God is a just Master, we are unfaithful, unfruitful, unprofitable servants; this Mediator takes up the matter between us.—*T. Adams.*

[13718] The only way of friendly intercourse between God and man, 'tis through a mediator; that's implied. Whether man in the state of innocency needed a mediator, is disputed among persons learned and sober; but in his lapsed state this need is acknowledged by all. God cannot now look upon men out of a mediator, but as rebels, traitors, as fit objects for His vindictive wrath. Nor can men now look up to God but as a provoked Majesty, an angry Judge, a consuming fire. And, therefore, were not it for a mediator (*i.e.*, a middle person interposing between God and us who are at variance, to procure reconciliation and friendship, as the word *mediator* imports) we could not but so dread the presence of this God, that, like our first parents (in that dark interval 'twixt their sinning, and the succour of that promise, Gen. iii. 15), we should have endeavoured to hide ourselves what we could from the presence of the Lord.—*Morning Exercises.*

#### IV. SUPREME FITNESS OF THE LORD JESUS TO BE A MEDIATOR.

##### I By virtue of the union subsisting between His perpetual manhood and perfect Godhead in the Holy Incarnation.

[13719] In order to the accomplishing of the work of reconciliation, it was necessary that the Mediator should be God and man in one person. It was necessary that He should be man (1) that He might be related to those of whom He was a Mediator and Redeemer; (2) that sin might be satisfied for, and reconciliation be made for it in the same nature that sinned. (3) It was proper that the Mediator should be capable of obeying the law broken by the sin of man, as a Divine person could not be subject to the law, and yield obedience to it (Gal. iv. 4; Rom. v. 19). (4) It was meet that the Mediator should be man, that He might be capable of suffering death; for, as God, He could not die, and without shedding of blood there was no remission (Heb. ii. 10, 15, viii. 3). (5) It was fit He should

be man that He might be a faithful high priest, to sympathize with His people under all their trials and temptations. (6) It was fit that He should be a righteous and holy man, free from all sin, original and actual, that He might offer Himself without spot to God, take away the sins of men, and be an advocate for them.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards).*

[13720] It was not enough to be truly man, and an innocent person: the Mediator must be more than a man; it was requisite that He should be God also, for (1) no mere man could have entered into a covenant with God to mediate between Him and sinful men. (2) He must be God, to give virtue and value to His obedience and sufferings; for the sufferings of men or angels would not have been sufficient.—*Ibid.*

[13721] Were He God and not man, we should approach Him with fear and dread; were He man and not God, we should be guilty of idolatry to worship and trust Him at all. The plan of salvation, therefore, by such a Mediator, is the most suitable to human beings that possibly could be, for here "mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other."—*Ibid.*

[13722] That God should have spoken "at sundry times and in divers manners," does not interfere with the truth that in the Gospel Covenant His promises are all centred in the presence of that "one Mediator, the *Man* Christ Jesus" It is not meant that God could not connect His blessings with particular persons or places, but that to do so was to employ created media as instruments of His mercy, and that all such media have been superseded by the one Person of the Incarnate Son. In his day was Moses a mediator; the priests were mediators; the angels exercised an intermediate ministry. But all these only exercised a function by way of office, which in the fulness of time was taken in its completeness by Him, who, by the constitution of His nature, was the true and real Mediator between God and man. So that what happened beforetime was subordinate to that which was actually fulfilled in the Incarnation of Christ; and it was in His Person who could say primarily, "The Father is in Me, and I in Him," that "the tabernacle of God" was "with men."—*R. J. W. Ilberforce.*

[13723] The Church has always insisted with greater vehemence on the doctrine of the Incarnation than on the many doctrines which flow from it; for to those who rightly believe the Incarnation of our Lord, His mediation, atonement, and intercession will appear as its natural consequence. But if either the Divine or human nature of our Lord be denied, one term in the mediation is lost, and if the two natures be confused, a *tertium quid* is substituted for His two distinct natures. Both parts are thus lost, for He would be the representative neither of the Divine nor the



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human nature, but of a new nature which partook of both, and yet was neither one in its full integrity. The truth of the Incarnation being granted, our Lord's fitness for the office of Mediator follows as a necessary deduction.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

**2 By virtue of His Divine commission and call.**

[13724] Jesus Christ most unquestionably possessed whatever *official* qualifications were essential to the legitimate and successful performance of priestly duties. "No man," St. Paul asserts, "taketh this honour unto himself; but He that is called of God, as was Aaron." This, then, is the first of all requisites; and had Jesus thrust Himself into the priest's office without being called of God, His services must have been ineffectual and nugatory, notwithstanding His transcendent personal excellences. He who is to stand in the breach between God and sinful men must have a Divine appointment. The post is not only very sacred, but it is pre-eminently honourable; and no man was at liberty to appropriate this honour unto himself. No; the incarnate Son of God, all-fit as He was, entered into none of His mediatorial offices without a bidding; all-worthy as He was, He took not this honour upon Him without being authorized. The language used to express this truth is strong and striking. He "glorified not Himself to be made an high priest." Marvellous indeed it is that Christ the Lord should be not simply honoured, but glorified in the mediatorial priesthood, when acting for men in things pertaining to God! And yet whatever of honour and of glory could redound even to the Son of God from the priestly office, was the appointment of Him who said, "Thou art My Son;" "Thou art a priest for ever."—*Rev. David Pitcairn.*

**3 By virtue of His adequate qualifications.**

[13725] Where shall that Advocate be found to plead for our poor nature before the tribunal of Divine justice? He who undertakes to plead the cause of the sinner must himself be sinless. He must not only possess sufficient ability for the office of a special pleader, but he must know every person and every case, with all the disadvantages of all the causes for which he undertakes. He must thoroughly understand the law and the government under which he pleads, and be equally solicitous to uphold the claims of righteousness as to secure the safety of the client who has resorted to him for protection. He must know the true ground on which to rest his plea with the certainty of success. Neither is it sufficient that he possess all these qualifications, and more than these, unless that he be lawfully constituted to the office. It is not enough, in our common courts of justice, between man and man, that many an able and feeling heart could stand up for poor guilty criminals, and plead their cause. He that advocates for them must have a legal call to the office, and be sworn into it according

to the laws of the court. How delightful is it to see that all these qualifications meet and centre in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ!—*Encyclopædia (Edwards).*

**V. THE ACTS OF CHRIST'S MEDIATION PRIOR TO THE INCARNATION.**

[13726] There is abundant demonstration, both from express statements of Scripture, and from the nature of each successive dispensation, that, from the first, men recovered the forfeited immortality through the suretyship of the everlasting Word. There were vast differences in the degrees in which Christ was made known; but, all along, there was but one Saviour, and that one Jesus of Nazareth. The early patriarch, who assembled his family round some rude altar, built at God's command, on the mountain, or in the valley, and there offered the firstlings of his flock; the Jew in Egypt, sprinkling his doorposts with the blood of the Paschal Lamb, or in the wilderness, following the pillar of fire and cloud; his children, settled in Canaan, thronging to a magnificent temple, with the blast of silver trumpets, and the floating of incense, and the pomp of a splendid priesthood—these were all, notwithstanding the striking differences in external circumstance, seeking the salvation of the soul through the same channel as ourselves, to whom the gospel is preached in its beauty and fulness.—*Melville.*

[13727] As soon as there was sin, there was salvation—salvation through Christ. And if there were salvation, there must have been the interference and agency of the Saviour, who, anticipating His passion and death, must have acted as an advocate with God, presenting the virtues of His own sacrifice, and thus averting from the guilty the doom they had deserved.—*Ibid.*

**VI. THE ACTS OF CHRIST'S MEDIATION WHILE ON EARTH.**

**1 The revelation of God's will to man.**

[13728] Christ had supreme authority as Son of God and divinely appointed Mediator, for His great mission, which was to reveal the Father, His nature, mind, and will. . . . It has been confidently asserted that Christ's teaching, as recorded in the Gospels, contains the germinal seed of all vital and important truth. There is no great doctrine found in the Epistles which is not in germ in the Gospels, and there is no deep saying of the Gospels which is not expanded in the Epistles.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13729] As God the Mediator spake more distinctly than the prophets had ever done before—that which He received of the Father He showed unto His disciples—His precepts, His exhortations, His explanations of the scheme of redemption were Divine revelations made to men. As God, He was the fountain of truth, and as man, He was enabled to speak to men.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

## 2 The fulfilment of all righteousness.

[13730] His righteousness was not only a perfect example for the imitation of mankind, but was also an offering to God. Whilst His righteousness, considered as a model, was part of His mediation as God to man, as an offering it was no less a portion of His mediation as man to God, since His holy life was an offering up by Him of a sweet savour acceptable to God. It was an offering which no mere man had ever yet been able to present. It represented the obedience which man owes to his Maker, and was typified in the peace-offerings provided under the Mosaic dispensation. This obedience supplies the imperfections of our own, and its merits shared with men make their works acceptable to God. This righteousness is imparted to mankind through their union with Christ, for as the guilt of the first Adam was transmitted to his posterity, so the righteousness of the second Adam is handed on to His people.—*Ibid.*

## 3 The offering of a sacrifice for sin.

[13731] His own immaculate Person was stained with blood, which is the emblem of sin, and of the atonement for sin; and it was not until the agonies of His own righteous soul, and the wounds inflicted on His body by His unrighteous enemies, had caused His very life's blood to flow, that He could *effectually intercede for us with God*. Blood was the only argument to which Divine justice would listen. Blood was the only plea that could move Divine faithfulness. Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins, and no restoration of sinners to the lost favour of God. No; it was not until He could carry with Him the blood of atonement that our great High Priest passed into the heavens, to appear in the presence of God for us. The blood was His passport. The blood was the pledge of His acceptance.—*Rev. David Pitcairn.*

[13732] In men, sacrifice for sin must precede the offering of a holy life, but in our Lord's case this process was reversed. In Him the offering of a holy life preceded the atonement for sin, because He was sinless. His holy life was therefore not only an acceptable offering to God, but it was a preparation for the great priestly act which He performed upon the cross. Although the negative holiness of innocence He possessed from the time He was conceived in the womb, yet the positive holiness of righteousness attained a growing perfection, for He was made perfect by the things which He suffered. Both priest and victim were representatives of a perfect humanity. God required expiation for sin, and no other victim would have satisfied that claim.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13733] In order to perceive how "we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot," it is necessary to see in Him both the anointed sacrifice and the anointed sacrificer. We must

believe that He who, as God's anointed One, hath given Himself for our sins, is the God-man Mediator; for as it was His manhood that placed Him in a condition to sympathize with us, and to suffer for us, it must not be forgotten that it was His Godhead, which in itself can neither suffer for sin, nor sympathize with sinners, that invested his whole active and passive obedience, in our nature and in our stead, with a value which is beyond calculation, and with an efficacy to which no bounds can be set.—*Rev. David Pitcairn.*

## VII. THE ACTS OF CHRIST'S MEDIATION AFTER HIS ASCENSION.

### I Intercession for man.

#### (1) *Rendering of the term intercession.*

[13734] This word is commonly employed in the English Bible as the rendering of a word (*ἐννυχαιον*) which does not precisely correspond with it. The Greek word signifies primarily a falling in with one, or getting close to him, then having intimate converse or dealing with him, obtaining his ear for anything we want, so that to press a suit or make entreaty with one came to be a quite common meaning of it. But it did not necessarily imply that what was sought had respect to another, any more than to one's self; and it might indifferently be a good or an evil that was the specific object of the entreaty. But in regard to the more prevalent application of the term, in Scripture as well as in common discourse—namely, as regards the priestly action of Jesus in representing the cause, and seeking the good of His people in the presence of the Father—the English word conveys the idea with substantial readiness. . . . In one passage—though only in one—the action of the Holy Spirit in the souls of believers is designated by the same term (Rom. viii. 27): "He maketh intercession for them with groanings." The word *intercession* here plainly does not quite suit, as they are themselves the subjects as well as the objects of the operation.—*Dr. Franz Delitzsch.*

#### (2) *Nature of Christ's intercession.*

[13735] The intercession of Christ consists in His interposing for sinners by virtue of the satisfaction He made to Divine justice. . . . In pleading for His people Christ appears before God with His own body; but whether He intercedes vocally or not cannot be known, though it is most probable that He does not; however, it is certain that He does not intercede in like manner as when on earth, with prostration of body, cries, and tears—which would be quite inconsistent with His state of exaltation and glory; nor as supplicating an angry judge, for peace is made by the blood of the cross; nor as litigating a point in a court of judicature; but His intercession is carried on by showing Himself as having done, as their Surety, all that law and justice could require. The end of Christ's intercession is not to remind the Divine Being of anything which He would otherwise forget, nor

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to persuade Him to anything which He is not disposed to do; but it may serve to illustrate the holiness and majesty of the Father, and the wisdom and grace of the Son; not to say that it may have other unknown uses with respect to the inhabitants of the invisible world. He is represented also as offering up the prayers and praises of His people, which become acceptable to God through Him. He there pleads for the conversion of His unconverted ones, and for the consolation, preservation, and glorification of His people.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards)*.

[13736] As on earth, in ancient ritual, the celebrant who had offered in the name of a worshipping people the prescribed victims in sacrifice, followed up that propitiating rite by the recitation of appropriate petitions, entreating for the people the Divine favour, forgiveness, and protection; so are we to conceive of Jesus' mediation on our behalf as not exhausted when on the cross He offered Himself in expiation of our guilt, but as continued in heaven. He is still, as before, the representative Priest for His people.—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

[13737] Christ's intercession for us with the Father denotes that, as Mediator and Reconciler, He continually represents before Him the human family as a race well-pleasing to the Father, such as may be the object of His love. But this movement, *ad intra*, is conditioned by a corresponding action *ad extra*, for Christ continually comes to the human family, and penetrates it with His holy energy, with His personal and progressive workings. As the redemption of the human race is not a mere process of nature, but is conditioned on the part of the race by the power of freedom and conscience; so also the spiritual coming of Christ, now set forth, is conditioned by an historical *economy*, according to which mankind are brought progressively under His influence, and are made susceptible of His active power. As it is He who comes in the Spirit, He comes alike in His Word and in His Sacraments; and by this progressive advent, He obtains an ever-strengthening hold upon humanity, an ever-deepening root; and can continually confirm before the Father the efficacy of His redemptive work.—*Martensen*.

### (3) *The foundation of Christ's intercession.*

[13738] The appearance of Christ in heaven, which is expressed by His standing in the midst of the throne, as a lamb that had been slain, may properly be called a virtual intercession. There is a language in that circumstance more forcible than in any words we can imagine. This is happily illustrated by the story of Amyntas and Æschylus, as Ælian relates it. Æschylus was condemned to death by the Athenians, and was just going to be led to execution. His brother Amyntas had signalized himself in the service of his country; and on the day of a most illustrious victory, in a great measure obtained by his means, had lost his hand. He

came into the court just as his brother was condemned, and, without saying anything, drew the stump of his arm from under his garment, and held it up in their sight; and the historian tells us, "that when the judges saw this mark of his sufferings, they remembered what he had done, and discharged his brother, though he had forfeited his life." Thus does Christ, our Elder Brother, silently, but powerfully, plead for our forfeited lives; and such is the happy consequence. His Father looks on the marks of His sufferings, and remembers what He has done, and in this sense His blood is continually speaking better things than the blood of Abel. We have an advocate with the Father, who is also the propitiation for our sins.—*P. Doddridge, D.D.*

### (4) *The bodily, as well as spiritual character of Christ's intercession.*

[13739] Amongst the most difficult things for our conception to grasp, amongst the most remote things which it is our business to bring near, and put on the commonplace daily list of the real and practical things of our faith, is the bodily existence of Christ in heaven, and the bodily office of His intercession there. It is indeed much more easy to abstract spirit from body, and so lightened to mount aloft to the height of our aspirations, than to maintain the due combination of body and spirit, and so laden to ascend together with Christ on high to regions where we assign the abode of as pure spirit as we can conceive, and there to place Christ in His human nature in the immediate presence of the everlasting Father of spirits. But nothing less than such an effort will avail towards the full understanding and the free and proper use of the intercession of our Saviour. It were even better to abide by the particulars of materiality with which the unpractised mind must at first engross such a conception, than not to entertain it at all: for it is not the Son of God, as such, that is the Mediator on our part between the Father and us; He stands on the Father's part only; but it is the Son of man, uniting the manhood with his Godhead. In the moment that we lose sight of this union, we have lost sight of the proper object of our hearts as seeking His intercession.—*R. W. Evans, B.D.*

[13740] The system of the spiritualist, by drawing his attention away from the particularity of this doctrine, allows not sufficient difference between the intercession of Christ and that of the Holy Spirit. For there is not given that formal externality to the former, which is so essential to its nature, and stands in such strong contrast to the internality of the latter. There is the usual confusion of the object with the subject, no effort being distinctly enjoined as necessary to carry us on from that help to our infirmities, which we feel that the Spirit supplies to the heart in prayer, to the lively apprehension of that avowed patronage of us which the Son is thereupon moved to undertake.—*Ibid.*



[13741] In proportion to the liveliness of its bodily consciousness will be the liveliness of the sense of this intercession of Christ in the mind which has been habituated to the proper contemplation. The glow of health and exaltation of high spirits put the man far onward in realizing to himself the spectacle of that glorious body, in which his Saviour ever liveth in heaven to make intercession. The pain of sickness and depression of spirits lead him, indeed, in the first instance, to view that body on the cross, but his faith, breaking into joy there, carries him beyond the veil into heaven to see Him in glory there also. So that even affliction, put as it is to its true account by the child of God, tends to exalt the mind to this heart-stirring contemplation, no less than the most joyous health. And, in short, amid all the trials of life, the very bodily excitement by which temptation works, procures him in some measure a defence against it, since it excites also a more lively contemplation of the body of his intercessor.—*Ibid.*

[13742] I see, I see Him with the eyes of faith, crowned with glory and honour, standing for ever in Thy presence, at the right hand of Majesty, to make intercession for us. And what breath can harbour misgiving of the love that inspires, or the mercies that flow out of that mediation? For He is God of Thy substance, and Man of ours; He who is Thy Son is also our *Brother, bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh.*—*St. Anselm.*

#### (5) *Its general efficacy.*

[13743] With what efficacy and success He discharges this great work of intercession there, sufficiently appears from that constant, never-failing prevalence which attended His prayers here. For He Himself expressly tells us that "the Father always heard Him" (John xi. 42). Heaven was always open to His prayers, and they could not but enter, where He, who made them, did command. There could be no frustration or denial, where every request had the force of a claim, and every petition was founded in a purchase. The divinity of Christ's person, and the surpassing value of His merits, put a commanding sovereignty into all His desires; so that everything which He asked of His Father was indeed a petition of right; and since His divinity made Him able to give, it was one part of His humiliation that He vouchsafed to ask. And for this reason some of His requests run *stylo imperatorio*, in a kingly dialect; and we sometimes find Him not only preaching, but also praying, as one "having authority" (John xvii. 24); "Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given Me be with Me, to behold My glory." It was not a mere prayer, but a kind of compound address, made up of petition and demand.—*R. South, D.D.*

[13744] The intercession of the Lord Jesus is all-prevailing, because of—(1) The excellence

of His person, not Jesus only, but Christ, the anointed One, the Son of God, in whom the Father is well pleased, whom He always hears. (2) The value of His satisfaction; its infinite value. "The precious blood" of the God-man Mediator. (3) The holiness of His desires. (4) The nearness of the relation between the Father and the Son. Christ prays for nothing but what the Father hath a mind to grant. There is but one will between the Father and the Son. (5) The validity of the eternal covenant. The fulfilment of the covenant engagements between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

#### (6) *Its special attributes.*

[13745] The intercession of Christ is—(1) Gracious. The pleadings of a "merciful High Priest"; free; not like the advocacy of men who take large fees, and require a pledge in hand before they undertake a case. (2) Skillful. The advocacy of One who understands the cause of His client, and the laws of the court; who knows what to present and what to reject in our desires. (3) Sympathizing, Heb. ii. 17, iv. 15, with such tender yearnings of love as no angel could have felt, with the love of One who has personally known human weakness and human need. (4) Authoritative. Intercession, not on the ground of charity, but of right; not only as a friend, but as a Divine officer; not only as one kin to us, but commissioned to be Surety and Mediator for us. (5) Continuous; ever-living, so long as there is need.—*Ibid.*

[13746] Christ makes every case which He takes up His own. He enters into all His people's concerns, gives them to see how much He sympathizes with them in all their exercises, and supports their souls with the full assurance of His everlasting attention. Their wants, their sorrows, their desires are all numbered before Him. For it is not their deservings, but His love—not what they have done or can do for themselves, but what they need, and what He can do for them, which regulates the bestowment of His grace. If they "*have not*," then, it is "*because they ask not*," or ask not in a way which will promote their highest good. What they are, and what they merit, comes not into the account. That they are His, that He has purchased their redemption, and received them as the gift of the Father—these are the motives that operate in the heart of Christ.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards).*

[13747] The conduct of Christ towards His friends is an important subject of thought, not only as a branch of evidence and as illustrative of the deeper doctrines of Christian theology, but as bearing upon the practical concerns of our own spiritual life. We who believe that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, but lives as the representative of the human race in the courts of heaven, a High Priest who can still be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, may well look upon His



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conduct towards His friends while on earth as the type of His conduct towards His friends now.—*Bp. H. Goodwin.*

(7) *Its blessed results.*

[13748] The intercession of Christ secures—(1) Our justification and the pardon of sins. The application of the pardon procured by His atoning work, Acts v. 31. (2) The acceptance of His people's persons, works, and services, perfumed with the sweet incense of His merits, Heb. iv. 14, x. 19, 21; Rev. viii. 3, 4. (3) The gift of the Holy Ghost, and His abiding presence in the Church, John vii. 39, xiv. 16, xvi. 17. (4) The life and security of His people; their golden altar of incense within.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13749] Methought the Lord showed me a heart. . . . It was a heart into which He had put a new song. The soul was making melody, attempting to make melody to the Lord. . . . Yet it faltered, and made wrong music; it jarred, and there was discord; and it grated on its own ear, and pained it. And God was listening to it; the omniscient God, who knows all things. But the song was presented through and by the Mediator of the new covenant; and if there was discord, it was removed by grace in atoning blood, by the sweet accents of intercession; for it came up as music in Jehovah's ear, melody to the Lord. It was not discord in heaven.—*Dr. John Duncan.*

[13750] Though the spirit of prayer and fervent supplication be one of the most effectual means to bring a man out of temptation, yet sometimes the temptation is so far beforehand with a man, that it prevents him, seizing and prepossessing his will and affections; and that to such a degree, that he has no heart to pray against it; but, like a thief, it steals upon him, and then binds his hands and stops his mouth, so that he can neither lift up heart nor hand to call in aid from heaven. In which forlorn estate, if Christ prays not in his stead, and solicits His Father for the succours of recovering grace, the sinner is left remediless in the cruel grasp of his insulting enemy, to be crushed and devoured by him at his pleasure. And now, what Christ did for Peter and other of His saints while He was here upon earth, the same He still does, and that with advantage; for all believers know that He is in heaven; where He has changed his place, indeed, but not His office; His condition, but not His affection.—*R. South, D.D.*

(8) *Its practical teaching.*

[13751] 1. How great is the guilt of undervaluing and rejecting such wondrous love! The unbeliever who rejects Christ rejects the only way of access to the presence of the Father.

2. How great the sin of making other intercessors! The Church of Rome distinguishes between mediators of redemption and intercession. "Angels do not redeem, but intercede." But what warrant is there for this in Scripture?

An advocate must be duly called and consecrated to the office. This is said only of Christ.

3. The baseness of self-righteousness. It dishonours Christ's intercession to imagine we can commend ourselves to God!

4. See the unwearied constancy of the love of Christ. He did not only die for His people, He ever liveth to intercede for them.

5. See the great encouragement to prayer. It shows where a Christian should fix his eyes. It suggests also a searching test for prayer. It is not every prayer that Christ presents. Some prayers are offered in sin, Psa. lxxvi. 18, lxxx. Let us ask ourselves when we pray, Is this such a prayer as I may expect the great High Priest to put into his golden censer? Again, what a comfort is it at times when we feel, through weakness or temptation, we cannot pray, to think the Lord is graciously interceding for us!

6. How constant should be our love to Christ! Kindness invites love. If we had a friend at court, who in a time of delinquency or debt took up our case freely and efficaciously, how should we feel towards him? Oh, how should our hearts burn with love to our advocate before the eternal throne!—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

2 Manifestation of His presence to man.

[13752] After the Lord's departure His presence was more intimate, because it was of a more spiritual kind than it had been before. Whilst He was on earth He conversed with men as a man, but when He had ascended He could dwell in them, and receive them into a real union with Himself. "When the Son of Man," says Leo, "betook Himself to the glory of His Father's majesty, He began in some ineffable way to be nearer by His Divine power, for the very reason that, according to His humanity, He was removed further off." And it was to this more intimate union that He referred Mary Magdalene on the day of His resurrection, when He bade her touch Him not, for He had not yet ascended to the Father. "I would not have you come to Me," explains Leo, "in bodily wise, nor recognize Me by carnal touch: I put you off to something higher, I prepare you for something greater. When I am ascended to My Father, then you shall touch Me in a more true and perfect manner, when you shall lay hold of that which you do not touch, and believe that which you do not behold."—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13753] The end and object of this presence of Christ through His mediatorial office is that He may be the great fountain of holiness and truth to His people. In God alone dwells absolute holiness. This holiness, imparted to the human nature of our Lord through its union with the Divine, constituted Him the Holy One of God, and all that He thus receives He imparts to His people, for "God hath made Him Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."—*Ibid.*

# VIII. THE MEDIATORIAL INTER-RELATIONS.

## 1 Connection between the Prophet, Priest, and King.

[13754] Christ's office as Mediator may be viewed under the threefold division of Prophet, Priest, and King. As the prophet under the old covenant appeared as a witness in behalf of truth, as the high priest presented the offering for the sins of the people, as Israel's king guarded and protected the people of God, these mediatorial offices were to be united in the Messiah, and in Him were to find their perfection and spiritual glory. He is the Mediator of the new covenant in virtue of His testimony, in virtue of His atonement, and in virtue of the establishment of a kingdom whose everlasting King, whose Lord and Head He is.—*Dr. H. Martensen.*

## 2 Connection between the Mediator and the Judge.

[13755] "There is," says Bishop Pearson, "an original, supreme, autocratical, judiciary power delegated, derived, given by commission. Christ as God hath the first together with the Father and the Holy Ghost; Christ as man hath the second from the Father expressly, from the Holy Ghost concomitantly. For 'the Father hath given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man;' not simply because He is a man, therefore He shall be judge, but because of the Three Persons which are God, He only is also the Son of Man; and therefore for His affinity with their nature, for His sense of their infirmities, for His appearance to their eyes, most fit to represent the greatest mildness and sweetness of equity, in the severity of that just and irrespective judgment." He will still be our Mediator, then. As God, His knowledge is perfect; as man, His sympathies are unfailing. As man, we shall behold Him, and His righteousness will be our plea for acceptance. In that day, those who are united to Him in the union of His body will have confidence, since He in whom they lived and died will still be their refuge.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

## 3 Connection between the Mediator, Intercessor, and Advocate.

[13756] The advocacy of Christ is distinguished from His mediation and from His intercession. Christ is a Mediator in respect of His person and office; an Advocate only in respect of His office. He is a Mediator as to all His offices; an Advocate only in respect of His priestly office. A Mediator for all mankind; an Advocate only for His own peculiar people. The advocacy of Christ also differs from His intercession. His intercession is more general, His advocacy more particular; His intercession, presenting His people's prayers and services, perfumed with His own merits; His advocacy

appearing for us in the face of accusers.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13757] In three passages from the apostolic epistles we find a notable consensus of statement on the present work of Christ as our Intercessor. St. John, St. Paul, and the anonymous writer to the Hebrews concur, almost in terms, in representing it as a continuation of our Saviour's earthly work, that He now prays in heaven for the pardon of His disciples' sins. St. John lays stress on the basis of this advocacy; it is His own personal righteousness and His propitiatory atonement: "If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins." St. Paul makes intercession the climax of that splendid series of facts on which reposes the safety of a believer: Christ not only died and rose, He even ascended to the Father's side, and there, says he, He "also maketh intercession." Step leads to step; and the last, the natural issue of all the chain of saving acts, is this of advocacy. In the third passage, from Hebrews, emphasis lies on the ceaselessness of that intercession, which is offered not by a mortal priest, but by One who ever liveth, and whose priesthood is unchangeable: "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

## 4 Connection between the Advocate and the Priest.

[13758] Christ as priest goes before; and Christ as an advocate comes after. Christ as priest continually intercedes; Christ as advocate, in case of great transgression, pleads. Christ as priest has need to act always; but Christ as advocate sometimes only. Christ as priest acts in times of peace; but Christ as advocate in time of broils, turmoils, and sharp contentions. Wherefore Christ, as advocate, is, I may call Him, a reserve; and His time is then to arise to stand up and plead, when His are clothed with some filthy sin that of late they had fallen into, as David, Joshua, or Peter; when some such thing is committed by them as ministereth to the enemy a show of ground to question the truth of their grace; or when it is a question, and to be debated, whether it can stand with the laws of heaven, with the merits of Christ, and the honour of God, that such a one should be saved. Now let an advocate come forth. Now let him have time to plead; for this is a fit occasion for the saints' advocate to stand up to plead for the salvation of his people.—*John Bunyan.*

# IX. THE SPECIAL INTENTION OF CHRIST'S OBULATION OF HIMSELF IN HEAVEN.

## 1 To commend to God both us and our services.

[13759] The fact that Christ presented Himself to God in the heavenly sanctuary in such a manner as constantly to commend to Him both

our persons and services, and with a view to render Him perfectly propitious to us, is proved by the design of the sacerdotal office. Of this office the oblation that followed the slaughter of the victim was always a principal function; and as every priest, unless he were wanting to his duty, would offer the piacular sacrifices with a desire that God would be propitious to his people, so it is concluded that Christ our High Priest, who in that office displays the greatest faithfulness and benevolence towards us, offered Himself to God in heaven as a piacular victim previously slain for our sins, in order that He might constantly commend to Him both our persons and our services, and with a desire to make Him perfectly propitious to us.—*William Outram, D.D.*

## 2 Particularly to commend to God our prayers.

[13760] It is evident that Christ offered Himself to God in heaven in order to commend to Him our prayers and desires. For as the Jewish high priest was a shadowy image of Jesus Christ our High Priest, and the inner sanctuary of the temple was a figure of heaven itself; so also the sacred incense which used to be burnt, both in the holy and in the most holy place, represented the prayers of the Church. So David compares his prayers with that very incense, as a thing signified with its sign. And the Jewish people offered up their prayers in the court, while the high priest was presenting the sacred incense, the symbol of those prayers, to God in the temple; by which rite he symbolically offered to Him those prayers which were at the same instant ascending from the people. For what is done with the symbol of any particular thing, may be said to be done symbolically with the thing itself. Wherefore, as the Jewish high priest typified Christ our High Priest, as the most holy place was a figure of the highest heavens, and the sacred incense was emblematical of the prayers of the saints, the conclusion is unavoidable, that the Jewish high priest burning this sacred incense before God in the inner sanctuary, prefigured our High Priest now in heaven commending to God the prayers of the Church.—*Ibid.*

[See "MOAIC ECONOMY," Vol. III., Section XI.]

## X. THE PARTICIPATION OF THE CHURCH ON EARTH WITH THE SAVIOUR'S WORK IN HEAVEN.

[13761] The Saviour's work in heaven is one in which the Church on earth takes part. The priesthood of our Lord rests upon His people, who are one with Him as the members of His body, and therefore through this union they become intercessors as well for themselves as for their brethren, and their prayers are heard, which otherwise would find no access to the ear of God. — *Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

## XI. THE FULFILMENT OF ANCIENT TYPES IN CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL WORK.

[13762] There was an important distinction and gradation in the ancient types of priesthood, which shadowed forth the perfect work of the Lord Jesus. (a) The ordinary priest was mainly engaged in preparing and offering sacrifice, attending to the ministrations of the tabernacle, and teaching the people. (b) The high priest was appointed to other services, especially entering within the Holy of Holies on the day of atonement, receiving the revelations of the will of God, wearing particular and typical garments, &c. The former typified Christ's work on earth, especially in offering the one great sacrifice on the cross; the other, Christ's work in heaven, when He entered, in glorified humanity, within the veil. (c) The priesthood of *Melchizedek* (Gen. xiv. 18–20; Psa. cx. 4; Heb. v. 6, vii. 17) represented a yet higher grade of royal priesthood, and shadowed forth the Lord Christ as "a priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi. 13); a priesthood standing alone, without succession, combining righteousness and peace; divinely appointed, and confirmed by oath; and continuing ever unchangeable and intransmissible (Heb. vii. 24). The Lord Jesus is now fulfilling all these types, as is set forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where He is contrasted with Aaron, and compared to Melchizedek; only, be it remembered, His perfection and fulness must ever surpass all types. As high priest, Aaron went into the Holy of Holies, to appear with blood before the Divine Presence; but it was permitted once a year only, and then for a few short moments till the flame of the incense had expired. Our great High Priest, too, entered in within the veil, to sit down on the throne, and to remain there for ever.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13763] The intercession of Christ was represented under the Mosaic ritual by the altar of incense. This altar of incense was placed between the altar of burnt-offering and the mercy-seat. It was situated originally within the veil, but afterwards outside, yet still in a line connecting the altar of burnt-offering with the mercy-seat. When, on the day of atonement, the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies, he filled his hands with incense from the altar of incense, and took with him a censer of coals from the altar of burnt-offering. Thus for a little season the priest, the sacrifice, and the incense were all within the veil, signifying the entering of Christ within the holy place not made with hands.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13764] It has been observed by Archdeacon Freeman that as the altar of incense stood before the veil which separated the Holy of Holies from the outer tabernacle, the smoke of the burnt-offering mingled with the fragrant incense ere it penetrated into the sanctuary. So the intercessions of Christ mingle with the sacrifice of the Church's prayers or praises ere they are



accepted in the holy place. The place of the Mosaic incense is supplied in the Christian scheme of the intercession of Christ, by "that intercessory will of His, that willingness to be offered, that desire to save, which, using the sacrifice as its instrument or plea, wrought the redemption and sanctification of the world." In the ritual of heaven, described in the Apocalypse, the Lamb as it had been slain stands before the Majesty of God, in the midst of the throne, and in the midst of the elders, so uniting the Church and the Father. The sacrifice took place once on Calvary, and it is not repeated, but continually offered up in heaven. There it stands as an abiding plea, and gives effect to the much incense which the Angel of the Covenant, Christ Himself, is offering on the golden altar which is before the throne.—*Ibid.*

[See "MOAIC ECONOMY," Vol. III, Section XI.]

## XII. IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE.

### I As an expository agent.

[13765] We are deeply persuaded that the doctrine and fact of the intercession—the culminating glory of a true Christology—may be used as an Ithuriel's spear to detect and expose all those false views of the sacrifice of the cross now so rife; and we are not sure that theologians have been careful to make that effective use of it which it is so fitted easily to serve. For to the whole tribe of theologians who represent the sacrifice of Christ as self-denial, self-sacrifice, surrender of self-will, and so forth—to all, in fact, who fail to see in Christ's death a true and proper propitiation, an endurance of penal wrath and expiation of sin, we may well put the question, What ministry, what function do you assign to Christ, as, in scriptural language, He maketh intercession for us? Not founding His requests on the plea that He hath satisfied Divine justice, redeemed His people, and purchased for them all saving blessings, securing for the gifts of Divine love, without impairing its freeness, all the inevitable certainty of Divine law itself—what sort of office do you think Christ, as Intercessor, is fulfilling? What, on your views, can it be but a ministry of apology and indulgence, aiming at securing concessions on either side or both; seeking to effect a compromise; smoothing down hostile feeling; pleading for kindlier constructions and suppression of differences; paving the way for an interview without the risk of an explosion? And in how dishonourable a light would such a kind of intercession present the character of God! Retaining an anger for which there is, on your view, no moral necessity; *unnecessarily* retaining anger, which can, in that case, be nothing but personal hostility and dislike to the sinner, and needing to be mollified and pleaded with to entertain kindly feeling—how could such a God, in His anger, command the veneration of His creatures; and how could His laying it aside indicate a love that should render Him worthy of

profound gratitude, confidence, and praise? There is a whole heaven of difference between this and the truth. God's anger is not inconsistent with love, as unnecessary anger inevitably is.—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review.*

### 2 As a protest against rationalistic self-sufficiency.

[13766] The doctrine of our Lord's intercession is a protest against that rationalism which would make each man in himself, and each man's prayers by themselves, acceptable to God. This would destroy our dependence upon Christ, and our humility and self-abasement, when we think of what we are in ourselves.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

### 3 As a protest against the virtual denial that there is but one prevailing Mediator between God and man.

[13767] The rendering of Divine worship to one Infinite Being must of necessity exclude the idea of rendering Divine worship, no matter how modified and excused, to any other being, dependent upon and created by the Supreme Being. . . . The invocation of the created, instead of the Creator, is . . . irreconcilable with Scripture, "which holds Him forth as the sole object of worship, and the *only* fountain of mercy." The worship of saints and of the Virgin Mary in the Roman Catholic Church has largely taken the place of the worship of Christ, the only legal intercessor between God and man, and thus virtually ignored the Mediatorship of Christ.—*Encyclopædia (Drs. McClintock and Strong).*

[13768] Idolatry, in the scriptural application of the term, is of two sorts, and consists (1) either in giving the honour due to the one true God, as Maker and Governor of the world, to any subordinate being, (2) or in giving the honour due to Christ, as the sole Mediator between God and man, to any subordinate mediator. The former is the idolatry forbidden by the Jewish law, and by that of nature. The latter is Christian idolatry properly so called. . . . This species of idolatry is, without doubt, chargeable on any Christian Church that shall adopt, in its religious addresses, another mediator besides Jesus Christ. . . . Enjoining the worship of saints and angels, under the idea of mediators and intercessors, though not, indeed, in exclusion of Christ as the one or chief Mediator, is in manifest defiance of His *sole* mediatorship.—*Elliott.*

## XIII. HOMILETICAL HINTS.

### I The intercession of Christ furnishes a ground for the highest gratitude.

[13769] Who would have wondered had He been enthroned to wreak vengeance upon the world, and to have rendered human existence an intolerable curse? But not so, He is made Master to hush all the discords, remove all the

diseases, and crush all the evils of the world. He is on the throne in order to wipe away all tears from all faces, and to make the world happy, with the happiness of God Himself. "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." A new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Love, amazing love, is this.—*Rev. David Pitcairn.*

- 2 The intercession of Christ furnishes a ground for the sublimest catholicity and the strongest confidence.

[13770] Let us rejoice in the authority of Christ. The race for whom in love He died is now under His control. His love for it now on the throne is as strong as when He bled for it on the cross. He is using His vast authority for its restoration, and it is getting better and brighter. Its moral agriculture is improving. A layer of loam is being spread over the world in which the old weeds and thistles wither and die, and new plants of heavenlier climates are springing up in every direction. Governments, religious institutions, and customs, that once grew here luxuriantly, are losing their root-hold, and are rotting away. Every plant which His heavenly Father hath not planted He is plucking up. Its moral atmosphere is becoming more salubrious, the lungs of conscience breathe freer, old diseases are gradually disappearing, and souls are getting stronger in resolve and deed. Its moral firmament is growing more luminous, new lights break through the clouds, new constellations rise on the horizon, and fresh rays come down from the sky of thought upon regions where mental midnight has long prevailed. Thus, under the masterhood of Jesus, humanity is advancing. To us, the impatient children of a day, the progress may appear slow. But time to Him is nothing, and He has a far higher estimate of moral achievements than we have. The conversion of one soul is not much to us; but to Him it is a stupendous event, producing a thrill of rapture through His holy universe. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one* sinner that repenteth." Oh, the perfect security of His Church and kingdom! Whilst the Head lives, the body can never be destroyed.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13771] It is not with Christ as with other testators, who die, and must trust the performance of their wills with their executors. But as He died to put it in force, so He lives again to be the executor of His own testament.—*Flavel.*

- 3 The intercession of Christ lays a strong engagement on God to bring His whole force and power for His saints' defence.

[13772] In Hebrews vii. 25, the words, "He liveth to make intercession," might with strictness be rendered or expounded as follows: "*He interposes, He acts as a representative and defender* (ἐντυγχάνω)."—*Dr. Saphir.*

[13773] One special end of His journey to heaven, and abode there, is, that He might (as the saints' solicitor) be ever interceding for such supplies and succours of His Father, as their exigencies call for; and the more to assure us of the same before He went, He did (as it were) tell us, what heads He meant to go upon in His intercession, when He should come there; one of which was this, That His Father should keep His children while they were to stay in the world, from the evil thereof (John xvii. 15). Neither doth Christ take upon Him this work of His own head, but hath the same appointment of His Father, for what He now prays in heaven, as He had for what He suffered on earth. He that ordained Him a priest to die for sinners, did not then strip Him of His priestly garments (as Aaron), but appoints Him to ascend in them to heaven, where He sits a priest for ever by God's oath. And this office of intercession was erected purely in mercy to believers, that they might have full content given them for the performance of all that God had promised; so that Jesus Christ lies lieger at court as our ambassador, to see all carried fairly between God and us according to agreement; and if Christ follow His business closely, and be faithful in His place to believers, all is well. And doth it not behove Him to be so, who intercedes for such dear relations? Suppose a king's son should get out of a besieged city, where he hath left his wife and children (whom he loves as his own soul), and these all ready to die by sword or famine, if supply come not the sooner; could this prince, when arrived at his father's house, please himself with the delights of the court, and forget the distress of his family? Or rather would he not come post to his father (having their cries and groans always in his ears), and before he eat or drink, do his errand to his father, and entreat him if ever he loved him, that he would send all the force of his kingdom to raise the siege, rather than any of his dear relations should perish? Surely, sirs, though Christ be at the top of His preferment, and out of the storm in regard of His own person, yet His children, left behind in the midst of sins, Satans, and the world's batteries, are in His heart, and shall not be forgotten a moment by Him.—*Gurnall.*

## PART IV.

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# RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(Continued).

### DIVISION E.

#### *THE OPERATION OF THE HOLY GHOST IN REDEMPTION.*

#### SYLLABUS.

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- (1) Quickening.
- (2) Awakening.
- (3) Interceding.
- (4) Enlightening.

- (5) Convicting of Sin.
- (6) Converting.
- (7) Regenerating.
- (8) Sanctifying.



# RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(Continued).

## DIVISION E.

### THE OPERATION OF THE HOLY GHOST IN REDEMPTION.

#### 1

#### OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST, GENERALLY CON- SIDERED.

##### I. NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK.

- 1 The manifested descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost was the temporal completion of the covenant of grace.

[13774] The office of the Holy Spirit may be spoken of generally as that of complementing the work of God the Father and God the Son, perfecting that which each has originated and created. — *Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology*.

[13775] In the orderliness of the Divine counsels the Divine will acts now through one, now through another of the Divine Persons. As it is said of the Second Person that "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John i. 3), and that by Him God made the worlds (Heb. i. 2), so "the Spirit of God" appears to have "moved upon the face of the waters," to bring forth light and order from darkness and chaos, and thus to have complemented the creation of matter.—*Ibid.*

[13776] As in the material world, at its first creation, the torpid elements demanded a quickening which could alone be given by the incumbent Spirit; so, analogously, the new creation by which the disorders of the now chaotic soul were to be subdued, and its whole nature and faculties harmonized to the Divine principle, belongs to the same holy Person.—*Canon Garbett*.

[13777] When the Holy Ghost had been revealed, no further counsel remained to be unfolded for the recovery of fallen man; no more to be done for the vineyard.—*A. Short, M.A.*, 1846.

[13778] To effect an entire restoration to the love of our heavenly Father, more was required than the forensic satisfaction for the sins of the  
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whole world, which the blood of the Redeemer had once for all offered; inasmuch as if it remained still outward, even if it had the power of warding off the penal consequences of sin, it still would leave the soul itself incapable of "the inheritance of the saints in light." For, on the one hand, it never could consist with the essential attributes of Him who is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," and is as "a consuming fire" to all wickedness, to admit into His actual presence the spirits of unpurified transgressors, merely on the strength of a reputative righteousness in its reality untransferred to the soul—and on the other hand, even if we were admitted into the company of heaven, with our natural dispositions unchanged, the beatific vision which is the bliss and glory of the saints would be misery to us. Men must be saved from the inward power of sin over the soul, as well as its penal consequences, and obtain an actual purification of nature from those corruptions, the odiousness of which in the sight of their Maker originally drove them from His spiritual presence, and would still exclude them as effectually as the fiery sword prevented their re-entrance into the earthly garden; hence the necessity of the work of the Holy Ghost.—*Canon Garbett*.

[13779] The Lord the Spirit, the Giver of life was to regenerate the deadness of man's soul; and by those subtle and inscrutable operations by which He penetrates the spirits of men, and works outwardly from the will till the whole is new fashioned, to restore to it the image which it had lost. Fresh affections, fresh desires and perceptions, those spiritual senses by which God is discerned, and His perfections and graces appropriated by the inward man, that *φύσις πνευματική* which man lost by the fall, and the super-addition of which was indispensable to restoration, all required His influences.—*Ibid.*

- 2 The manifested descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost was for the aiding of man to "will and to do of God's good pleasure."

[13780] As the Holy Ghost wrought in the beginning of the re-creation (Luke i. 35), so He continues to work throughout its whole course;

*regenerating* mankind, that they may become partakers of the new nature, *sanctifying* them that the new nature may abide with them in the kingdom of grace, and eventually reach that abode where the Incarnate God has gone to prepare a place for those whose sanctification reaches its final stage.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology*.

[13781] Our psychological inquiries bring us face to face with the fact that man's purely spiritual will can become an antecedent to a purely material sequent. And how much less strange is the belief that an all-pervading Intellect interweaves its influences with our thoughts and our desires—thus to regulate our judgment and suggest and foster our emotions! We may with as much reason exclude the Divine presence and activity from amid the formless and self-inert atoms of visible life, as give up the truth that, over and around and among our impalpable wishes and motives, the moral power of the Omnipresent is in action.—*Joseph Sortain, B.A.*

## II. ITS RELATION TO THE WORK OF GOD THE SON.

As both coincident with and proceeding from work.

[13782] According to the New Testament, the action of the Spirit in the Church is the prolongation of Christ's work into Christian history. It is the extension, it is, with due limitations we may say, the perpetuation of the incarnation, in its power of making humanity partakers of the Divine Nature. Therefore, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Along with this Spirit comes the gift of a new moral being, a new capacity and direction to the affections and the will, a clear perception of truth by the renewed intelligence. "If any man be in Christ, he is the new creation." "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes free from the law of sin and death." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." All this is but the result, the accompaniment of the gift of gifts itself, of the great characteristic gift of the New Covenant, of the Divine indwelling really vouchsafed to each faithful Christian soul.—*Canon Liddon*.

[13783] If Christ be the head, and His Church the body, the Holy Spirit is the soul which animates the body; if Christ be the vine, and His people the branches, the Holy Spirit is the vital principle, which, through the juices of the tree, communicates life to the branches; if Christ be the chief corner-stone, and His Church the temple which that chief corner-stone supports and holds together, the Holy Spirit is the Shekinah, by which God manifests His presence in the temple. And, lastly, as Christ, when He became incarnate, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, so likewise His

people, when they are born again into that new life which they live in Him, are born of the Spirit.—*C. A. Heurtley, B.D.*

[13784] May we not suppose that the influences of the Divine Spirit, after having gradually interpenetrated the human nature of Jesus, carrying it forward from one degree of glory to another through the various stages of birth, life, and resurrection, at length, the process being by the ascension completed, overflowed their receptacle—like the precious ointment on the head that ran down upon Aaron's beard, even unto the skirts of his clothing—and descended in plentiful effusion on the members of His mystical body?—*F. A. Litton, M.A.*

## III. INESTIMABLE VALUE OF THE SPIRIT'S GIFT.

### 1 Its general value.

(1) *The work of the Spirit is, in its own place, as needful and as important as the work of Christ Himself.*

[13785] We are too apt, in modern times, to overlook the necessity, or to underrate the value of the Spirit's grace; we talk much of the Saviour, but little of the Sanctifier; yet a consideration of the words which Christ addressed to His disciples in the immediate prospect of His leaving them should teach us that the agency of the Spirit is so essential and so important, that His advent would more than compensate for the departure of the Saviour. "It is *expedient* for you," says our Lord, "that I go away; for if I go not away, the Spirit will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you" (John xvi. 7).—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

[13786] How transcendent a gift this is, we can best understand when we remember that Christ, who would not and could not deceive, proffered it to His mourning disciples as a substitute for Himself, as a sufficient compensation for His own absence. He was Himself one Comforter, and the Holy Ghost, whom the Father would send in His name, should be another; yea, in some sort it was expedient that He should go away, for the presence of that other Comforter with them should *more* than make up for His own absence from them.—*Abp. Trench.*

[13787] The charm of His personal presence, of His voice, of His touch, was to be transcended. Something was to be given to them not only as precious, but more precious than His loving assurance was to Peter, to Thomas—something more precious than the "Neither do I condemn thee" was to the frail penitent on the temple floor; more precious than the "This day is salvation come to this house" was to Zaccheus; more precious than the "Thy faith hath saved thee" was to the weeping outcast in Simon's house. What could be more precious; what could compensate for the loss of His

presence; what could make it expedient for them that He should go away? Could it be anything less than the living, indubitable, abiding attestation of the Spirit of God to their adoption? Only thus could the promised Comforter be "another Comforter," not acting in His stead merely, but by blessed assurances supplementing His eternal work. Only thus could it be more blessed for them not to see than to see. Only thus could they enter upon the legacy which He bequeathed to them, when He said: "My peace—deep, untroubled, assured—I give unto you" (John xiv. 27).—*R. N. Young.*

[13788] To every revelation of God among men, to every gracious exhibition of Divine mercy, to every fruitful presentation of the Sacrifice offered once for all, to every pulse of holy life and devotion, the Spirit is essential. Not a prayer reaches the holiest place, not a song ascends to heaven, not an act of Christian grace and charity sheds its fragrance upon earth, but in answer to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.—*Ibid.*

[13789] It is remarkable with what uniformity the prophetic writers ascribe the bestowment of spiritual blessing exclusively to the influences of the Holy Ghost. Is Messiah's kingdom to be established above the nations and on the tops of the mountains?—it is the zeal of the Lord of Hosts which is to perform this. Are believers to grow up as plants and as willows by the water-courses? Is one to say, I am the Lord's, and another to call himself by the name of Jacob, and a third to subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel? It is because the Lord pours His Spirit upon the seed, and His blessing upon the offspring. Is the temple of the Lord to be reared in all goodness of its architectural symmetry? "It is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Is there in the congregation of the dead, which for ages have slumbered in the valley of vision, the stirring and heaving of a fresher life? It is because the Spirit has come from the four winds, and breathed upon the slain that they might live.—*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*

[13790] There is not a grievance to be redressed, nor a hope to be inspired, but by Him, and in all our endeavours, alike for our own advancement and for the spread of the kingdom of Christ, we should be at once awed into reverence and attracted into faith by the announcement, "It is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."—*Ibid.*

[13791] The promised grace of the Spirit has respect to every duty which we can be called to discharge, and to every change that can possibly occur in the condition, the temptations, and the trials of His people; for whether we be called to fight against our corruptions—the Spirit is our sanctifier; or to endure affliction—the Spirit is our comforter; or to choose the path of duty

in times of perplexity—the Spirit is our guide; or to engage in prayer—the Spirit is the spirit of grace and supplication; or to cultivate any one of the graces of the Christian character—they are all "the fruits of the Spirit."—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

[13792] Whatever may be our duty, and however formidable the difficulties by which we are surrounded, we can look up to God on the warrant of His own word, for the aid of that "good Spirit" who has promised "to help our infirmities."—*Ibid.*

## 2 Its doctrinal value.

[13793] If the sceptic rejects the dogma of the operations of God the Holy Ghost, and considers it to be no more than the effect of fanaticism, he must yet acknowledge it to be a fanaticism of singular power. If the belief be a belief alone, without any objective reality in the facts of the spiritual world, yet the belief may turn the victory, just as in ancient times the superstitious confidence of some struggling army in the assistance of an angelic warrior has turned many a doubtful battle into a glorious victory. The dogma brings a moral advantage, even if it be untrue.—*Canon Garbett.*

[13794] By itself it teaches nothing, but without its aid all human doctrine is but vain. It is this which gives life and strength to every religious truth which we hear; this which imprints on our soul and recalls to our attention those sacred principles to which our reason has already assented. Distinct from conscience, but the vital spark by which our natural conscience is sanctified, it both enables us to choose the paths of life, and to persist in those paths when chosen; and, though, like the free and viewless air, it is only by its effects that we discern it, it is the principle of our moral as the air of our natural health; the soul of our soul, and the Shekinah of our bodily temple.—*Ep. Heber.*

## IV. REQUIREMENTS OF THE DIVINE AGENT FOR THE PERFECTING OF HIS WORK IN MAN.

### 1 Man's realization of his need.

[13795] We must duly estimate the natural indifference, ignorance, alienation, dread, and despondency of the human mind towards God, before we can duly estimate either the necessity or the worth of that spiritual awakening, illumination, conversion, peace, and hope, which the influences of the Holy Ghost produce.—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

[13796] Culture is good, genius is brilliant, civilization is a blessing, education is a great privilege; but we may be educated villains. The thing that we want most of all is the precious gift of the Holy Ghost.—*John Hall.*

### 2 Co-operation of human faculties.

[13797] Two things are needed in a viol: the



string whose vibrations contain the musical impulse, and the hand that sets it in motion. The string cannot move itself, neither could the hand produce music if it were not for the string. Human faculty is like the string, and Divine influence is the hand or power.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[13798] We have no reason to suppose, or to teach, that the Spirit of God sets aside the action of a man's own mind, that it constrains that action to unwonted channels, or that it produces results in the mind without making use of the faculties which were appointed for such results. There be many persons who seem to think that the human soul is like a stereoscopic box, and that the Divine Spirit takes truths which have been framed outside of the mind, just as men take pictures that have been framed outside of the box, and slides into the soul these pictures of truth which it had no hand in making, and which it only sees when they are put into it. There is no evidence of any such results framed by the Divine mind. In other words, there is no evidence that God dispossesses the mind, or considers it incompetent for the results which it was designed to produce.—*Ibid.*

[13799] Co-operative labour is just as necessary in spiritual as in material things. In extracting wealth from the earth, or hidden treasures from the air, all natural influences conspiring, a man specializes these influences by the application of them to the object which he has in view; and in securing spiritual blessings, a man specializes the generic influences of the Divine mind. Not only can we prepare ourselves to make the soul fructify under the Divine light and warmth, but we can also resist these influences. The Divine influence is cogent, but it is not irresistible in any proper sense of the word.—*Ibid.*

[13800] It requires a talent, so to speak, for the Holy Spirit, to entertain or receive Him. A rock cannot receive the Holy Spirit. No more can a mind that has lost, or extinguished, the talent for inspiration. The Holy Spirit, glorious and joyful truth, does find a way into souls that are steeped in spiritual lethargy, does beget anew the sense of holy things that appeared to be faded almost away. But when the very faculty that makes His working possible is quite closed up, or so nearly closed that no living receptivity is left for Him to work in, when the soul has no fit room, or function, to receive His inspiring motions, more than a tree, half dead, to receive the quickening sap of the spring, or an ossified heart to let the life-power play its action, then, manifestly, nothing is to be hoped for longer from His quickening visitations. The soul was originally made to be dwelt in, actuated, filled with God, but finally this high talent is virtually extirpated; when, of course, there is nothing to hope for longer.—*H. Bushnell, D.D.*

### 3 Preparation for spiritual influence.

[13801] A man may prepare himself for friendship, and may prepare himself for society, ac-

cording to the nature of the relations into which he is going. If it be for pleasure that he is to prepare himself, he throws off care and burden, and, as it were, raises into activity that part of his mind by which he enjoys. If it is a company of artists into which he is going, he prepares himself to be influenced by their peculiar tendencies. If he is going among friends where his social faculties are to be brought into play, he as it were rouses up those faculties in him so that they shall be in the highest state of activity. If he is going where there is to be music, it is for this that he prepares himself. We are conscious that we receive influences from each other by preparing the mind to be susceptible to those influences. So it is in the power of a man to prepare his soul to be acted upon by the Divine Spirit. Not that he is not acted upon at all times; but he may prepare himself so that he shall be acted upon the most favourably.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[13802] There would be summer if there were not a farmer; but the farmer knows how to make summer work to advantage for him, as otherwise it would not have done. There would be flowers if there were no florists; but the florist knows how to make the sun bring forth exquisite colour and forms, as it never would have done if it had not been for his interposition and preparation. There would be the universal influence of the Spirit of God, doubtless, if every human being were swept off from the face of the earth. There has been a universal Spirit of God which has brooded over the race of man from the beginning, and that has been bringing out, little by little, the nobler qualities of human nature; and this universal Divine Spirit will doubtless be still active; but by meeting the Divine Spirit, by preparing for it, by opening the soul to its influence, and by co-operating with it, men have made themselves recipient of greater blessings, a thousand-fold, than they would have received from the unassisted Divine influence.—*Ibid.*

### V. HISTORICAL EPOCH OF THE SPIRIT'S DISPENSATION.

[13803] It has pleased God to make Himself known among men in three ages. The first age of Divine knowledge and worship, beginning at the creation of man, may be understood to have extended up to the coming of Christ. . . . The second age of the development of the doctrine of God may be called the age of Immanuel—*God among men.* . . . A sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, an appearance as of separate tongues, like as of fire, which sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. At that moment the third age of the development of God for the restoration of the world finally began, never to come to an end, or to be superseded upon the earth, till the restitution of all things, when the Son of Man should come again in the clouds of heaven, in like manner as the disciples had recently seen Him go into heaven.—*Bp. Moberly.*



[13804] The third age crowns, but in no respect supersedes, the other two. God the Father is still the Creator, the great object of all true worship, the beginning of all things, the Father of Christians (being the Father of Christ), the Giver of the Holy Ghost. The Son is still our only Redeemer, our Lord, and our God. Though absent from us in the flesh for our good, He is still ever present with us. He walketh among us and in our churches; when we meet, two or three, to pray in His Name, He is in the midst of us. He is in our poor, in our sick, and in our suffering people. If any despise or persecute even His little ones, it is He who is despised and persecuted. He is with us even unto the end of the world. But the most immediate, characteristic, and peculiar presence of God among us in this the third age is His presence in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwelt in the Redeemer Himself without measure or degree, sanctifying and making holy in the most perfect manner the Man Christ Jesus. Of that fulness the Lord breathed upon the apostles even before the ascension. When on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came down in the fuller and more peculiar manner that characterizes His presence in the Church, the Church received the full gift which her Lord had partially bestowed upon her before, and in that presence she retained His presence also. Thenceforward, the Spirit sanctifying the Church at large, and the separate members of it, Christ walked in the Church, and the separate members became Christ-bearing, Christ being formed in them, according to the language of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians, by the Holy Spirit.—*Ibid.*

## VI. MARVELLOUS EFFECTS OF GOD THE SPIRIT'S WORK.

### I. Generally considered.

[13805] The ever-present Spirit of God produces in the spirit of man those happy effects which, taken together, may be expressed by one word—salvation. By an agency which does not, cannot destroy the freedom, the spontaneous and natural acting of the human spirit, the Spirit of God becomes, in that spirit, the author of a new and spiritual life—the source of strength, of knowledge, wisdom, spiritual perception, and discernment; of practical attention to the gospel; of obedience, growth in grace, and conformity to the image of the Lord; of contrition; of peace and joy in believing; of quietness and assurance of Divine love; of attraction to the Saviour; of unity and affection among Christians; of tenderness and purity; of devotion and usefulness; of goodness, truth, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, and self-government.—*W. H. Stowell, D.D.*

[13806] By its agency on the natural faculties of the soul, that influence, indeed, supplies us with recollections ever seasonable to support or to subdue our weak or rebellious nature; it hallows our thoughts by attracting them to

hallowed objects; it strengthens our virtuous resolutions by renewing on our mind those impressions which gave them birth; it elevates our courage and humbles our pride by suggesting to our recollection, at once, our illustrious destiny and the weakness of our unassisted nature.—*Bp. Heber.*

[13807] Is not the supposition of a supernatural awakening, a "something" of life infused at the source of moral being, forced on us by the sudden and entire transformation, ten thousand times exhibited, of those who were the slaves of lust and selfishness, into the character of the pure, self-denying, humble followers of the Lamb? We think there is: we think the philosophical explanation would fare us ill when confronted with the facts of Christian history, as when tried by the declarations of the Divine word. Have the triumphs of the gospel, on a large scale, never suggested this inference, even to the sceptic? Have such instances as we have referred to never made him exclaim, "Well, there is something in this conversion past my comprehension, after all"?—*British Quarterly Review.*

[13808] Our belief is, that had there been no statement given in Scripture respecting the cause of conversion—had the entire doctrine of regeneration been withheld—had the Scriptures maintained an absolute reserve on the question, the natural conclusion forced on the mind, on the view of the marvellous results of the gospel, would have been, this change is the work of an almighty, life-giving power on the soul. This would be no more than giving more positive expression to the conjecture which Socrates and others framed respecting the access of Divine assistance in any moral change, such as they in their darkness could imagine, or in their infirmity approach. What if, with an enlightened and unprejudiced judgment, they had beheld the example of the apostles, or of the first disciples at Thessalonica, at Athens, at Corinth; or had contemplated, in later history, the career of Howard, of Henry Martyn, of Wilberforce; or had witnessed the transforming efficacy of the gospel on many of the heathen; the purity, benevolence, and supreme love of God which have taken place of the sensuality and ferocity of their previous character—would Socrates, would Plato, have refrained from the exclamation, "This work is of God, a principle of life imparted by Omnipotence, an effect which no persuasions of philosophy, no presentation of motives could produce."—*Ibid.*

[13809] According to the theory of Laplace, when the vast central body of nebulous matter had reached its condensing point, immense masses one after another, centres of systems of worlds, moved off with velocity incalculable, yet with harmonious and majestic march, to fill all space with proofs of creative power. On such a scale are the vast impulses of the Spirit of God, in successive ages, in the moral world.—*Presbyterian Quarterly.*

2 Specially considered as to the day of Pentecost.

[13810] What was the immediate effect of Pentecost? Thousands were instantly converted—the sword of the Spirit seemed newly edged with power, and, bathed in the lightnings of heaven, flashing conviction on human consciences, and piercing to the recesses of the soul. The gospel went flying abroad to the utmost ends of the earth, levying human hearts in the name of Christ, wherever it came. The influences of the Spirit poured over the world like an inundation,—a new deluge, overturning the altars and sweeping away the vestiges of idolatry; and, had the vital flood continued to roll on, the only altar left standing would have been that which sanctifieth the gift and the giver—the altar of the cross. New territories were added to the domains of the church—vast tracts of the moral wilderness were taken into the garden of the Lord. The Church beheld her converts flocking to her from all directions, like clouds of doves to their windows; and among the wonders of that period, one was, to see her enemies lick the dust—to see her bitterest persecutors become her champions and her martyrs—to see leopards become lambs, and wolves become kids.—*J. Harris, D.D.*

[13811] After Pentecost the Church became one region of life, of Divine vitality throughout; in which whosoever breathed, lived, enjoyed life in perfection. From a state of unsightly barrenness and drought, it was suddenly covered with verdure, like the garden of the Lord. Believers themselves seemed reconverted; if sinners became saints, saints themselves became as angels; thus fulfilling the prophecy which had said, "The weak shall be as David, and David as an angel of the Lord."—*Ibid.*

[13812] On the day of Pentecost Christianity faced the world, a new religion, without a history, without a priesthood, without a college, without a people, and without a patron. She had only her two sacraments and her tongue of fire. The latter was her sole instrument of aggression.—*William Arthur.*

[13813] No sooner had the Twelve received the power from on high, for which they had been bidden by the Lord to tarry in the city of Jerusalem, than they began to impart it to others. Perhaps we may not unduly generalize here, and drawing a Christian universal from this particular, say that the true fire of the Holy Spirit can never be present in any man without its calling him instantly upon endeavouring to diffuse that light and heat to others beside himself.—*Ep. Moberly.*

VII. ITS DISTINCTION FROM THE NATURAL ENERGIES OF THE SPIRIT OF MAN.

[13814] It seems to me to be important to keep asunder in thought the natural energies of the spirit of man from the supernatural energies produced by the direct infusion or influence of

the Holy Spirit of God. Difficult as it is, or impossible in particular cases to distinguish them, yet in reality they are different, and in thought may easily be kept unconfused. The free, created spirit of man, the wonderful work of God, has its own powers; and these, differing greatly in different individuals, are sometimes capable of extraordinary efforts, which nevertheless lie altogether within the scope of the natural powers of humankind. It seems to me to be a mere rhetorical confusion, capable, however, of leading to very mischievous consequences, to regard the intellectual achievements of great men, as of Homer, of Milton, or of Newton, as aught but natural achievements, or to attribute them in any strict sense to the infusion, or inspiration, or whatever other word be preferred, of the Holy Spirit of God.—*Ibid.*

VIII. THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ACTION IN THE CHURCH OF GOD.

[13815] In spite of human lukewarmness, tongues of fire, kindling into burning words the soul's consciousness of the sublimest truth, and the rushing mighty wind, endowing a company of feeble peasants with a heaven-sent impulse to save and bless humanity, live on through the ages, not as the monopoly of the recipients of such gifts, but as the appanage and endowment of the holy Body. And there are promises attaching to the Spirit's presence, which the Church, and she alone, can realize. The Church alone, and not the individual; the Church alone, and not any fragment of the Church; not, for instance, even the great Latin Patriarchate, between the tenth and sixteenth centuries, severed already from the East, but not as yet itself further subdivided by the Reformation; only the entire body, acting collectively or by fair and recognized representation, is really warranted in the certainty of guidance into all the truth.—*Canon Liddon.*

[13816] Of the whole body alone can we say that, through the preserving breath and vital force of the Spirit, it will never fail. Particular churches, diocesan, national, provincial, patriarchal, may become heretical; entire continents may be lost to Christ for centuries; much more may individuals, the saintliest, the most gifted, after they have preached to others, themselves become cast away. For as the source of her corporate infallibility, as the conservative force which makes her utter failure impossible, the Divine Spirit is given only to the collective Church; nor do the misunderstandings or the errors whereby man has marred the Spirit's work imply that the one gift is permanently withdrawn, any more than the losses and divisions of Christendom, or the advances of unbelief, can threaten, however remotely, the guarantees which assure her possession of the other.—*Ibid.*

[13817] We must not think that the Comforter was either promised, or else given, only to the apostles, but also to the universal Church of

Christ, dispersed through the whole world. For, unless the Holy Ghost had been always present, governing and preserving the Church from the beginning, it could never have sustained so many and great brunts of affliction and persecution, with so little damage and harm as it hath.—*Homily of the Holy Ghost.*

[13818] It is the Spirit to whom, of right, belongs the induction of men into the work and office of the holy ministry; and however arrogantly men may place their pretensions, however high, to their own satisfaction, they can accurately trace their genealogy, they are vile intruders into the sacred office if the call of the Spirit has not been given them, and if the unction of the Holy Ghost do not attest the vitality of their orders. No amount of classical erudition, no attainments of academical scholarship can compensate for the lack of these. Research, to whose eagle eye the deep mysteries of nature become revealed things, knowledge to grasp, judgment to analyze, capacity to combine, fancy that can mould all shapes in earth and heaven into images of beauty and of power, eloquence whose lightning thoughts are winged with words of thunder, affection whose earnest eye and troubled brow speak far more impressively than language—all these are useless and cumbersome hindrances unless the Spirit breathe upon each and give it its energizing power. Like flowers in the chamber of affliction, their perfume but sickens the patient and aggravates the deadliness of the disorder.—*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*

#### IX. HIS MYSTERIOUS AND SILENT OPERATIONS.

[13819] Of the *mode* in which spiritual influence acts upon a moral agent, Scripture says nothing. It leaves this unrevealed, as it does all other metaphysical problems, the solution of which is not essential to practice.—*Bp. Jackson.*

[13820] Is it not positive law of the Holy Spirit's working that it moves in and through the natural laws of the soul itself? It creates no new elements of mind. It introduces no new principles of mental action. It is simply one work of God within another. It is a Spirit energizing a spirit.—*A. Phelps, D.D.*

[13821] Divine influence transfuses itself through the natural operations of human intellect, of human sensibilities, and of human will, so delicately in the process, and so evenly in the result, that the mind is unconscious of any other efficiency than its own.—*Ibid.*

[13822] If mind can act on body as well as body on mind, is it possible for us to say to what extent, in the ordinary affairs of life, and in matters which are only incidentally connected with religion, the government of the world itself may be carried on by a similar influence, and the Spirit of the Most High be, more or less,

continually present, to direct our attention and determine our choice between the various motives which contend around us for the preference, and the various lines of action to which those motives point the way. The grace of the Spirit, then, may be, in truth, a constituent part of the most extensive and important of all our Maker's dispensations; of that inspecting, namely, and corrective care whence the moral world derives its power of controlling and conquering the material creation, and by which and through which all things work together for the welfare of those who love Him.—*Bp. Heber.*

[13823] The silent nature of the Spirit's operations has sometimes made His agency to be denied altogether by those who are ever demanding some sensible evidence of the truth communicated in the Word. But those who urge this objection forget that many of the most powerful of the agents of nature are themselves unseen, and are only to be discovered by their fruits. We do not, for instance, see the wind, either when it comes in the gentle breeze to fan us, or when, in the hurricane, it works such devastation in the labours of man and the very works of God. The heat that nourishes the plants of the earth, and the electricity that is so intimately connected with all atmospheric and organic changes, move secretly and in silence. These individuals forget that God is always Himself unseen in the midst of His works. When we walk forth in the silence of eventide to meditate, we are constrained to acknowledge that God is everywhere present among these works of grandeur; and yet, by intense gaze, we cannot discover His person, nor by patient listening hear the sound of His footsteps. No jarring sound of mechanism comes across the void that intervenes between us and these heavens—no voice of boasting reaches our ears to tell of the worker: it is the heavens themselves that declare His glory.—*J. McCosh, D.D.*

[13824] Why should the God who created us not be able to renew the heart when it is debased by the effects of sin, and yet be unseen? There is a manifest congruity in the circumstance that He conducts His work so silently and imperceptibly. It is only by such a mode of procedure that the spirit of man can retain its separate action and freedom. There is no violence done to man's nature in the supernatural work carried on in the heart. The dealings of God are, in every respect, suited to the essential and indestructible principles of man's nature. "I drew them with the cords of a man, with the bands of love."—*Ibid.*

#### X. HIS OPERATIONS VIEWED UNDER THE EMBLEM OF FIRE.

##### 1 He illumines.

[13825] He illumines the mind in order to instruct it. Almost the first Divine utterance in this world was, "Let there be light." That



command has never been revoked. God's deeds are not evil ; He does not prefer darkness. He wants to have men understand Him. In His light we are taught that we shall see light. The sun will become visible by his own beams. And surely no flashing flame of a beacon upon a sea-cliff has ever had for its welcome office the giving of helpful radiance to imperilled men more certainly than the blessed Bible has had for its office the becoming of a lamp to their feet.—*C. S. Robinson.*

[13826] The Scriptures would not be enough for men's salvation alone. The human will is so perverse that even the most intelligent people need to be instructed like little children in this revelation of God. Hence Jesus promised the Comforter especially in this behalf, "Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." Christ is the true Light of the world ; but the Holy Spirit's office is to lead men to the Light. Believers are "the children of light ;" but the Holy Spirit's office is to translate them "from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son." Hence He shines on the truth, and makes every eye find new beauties and new meanings in it.—*Ibid.*

## 2 He purifies.

[13827] He purifies the soul that He may come and dwell in it. So inveterate is the corruption of our nature, that it needs to be cleansed as if by fire. Ponder for a moment our common word "spirituality." How often we speak it ! Do we ever realize what is its exact meaning ? It refers to the positive indwelling of the Holy Ghost with each believer. "The Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, He dwelleth in you." Paul expresses a surprise that any Christian should be ignorant of this, and exclaims, "What ! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you ?" Of course, then, before this Divine Tenant enters, He is sure to cleanse such a palace. There must be immeasurably much that always has to be brought out, like so much rubbish, to be burned. But when once established, how glorious is the companionship ! And how the light of the Spirit's presence seems to shine out through the countenance and life !—*Ibid.*

## 3 He warms.

[13828] He warms the entire being that He may render us vigorous in service. Religious emotions are much misunderstood. We are placed between two errors and exposed to bias from both. Mistake either way hinders progress. The new zeal means boiling. And there is such a thing as boiling over. There is a great deal of zeal which is not according to knowledge, just as there is an effervescence that wastes itself in foam. On the other hand, there is an apathy of feeling which needs above everything else to be broken up. And one frequently becomes confused under consciousness of too

little emotion or fear of too much. The true medium is fixed in a healthy heat, such as is diffused by exercise and legitimate activity. Watch one of your neighbours, who enters your room on a winter's night ; he is chilled and taciturn, and curt to even the children ; he barely notices your greeting ; he seems torpid to even common courtesy. In a few moments, however, his blood begins to flow again under the genial influences of the ruddy coals. He is enlivened and revived. So of the soul : sinking low, and becoming benumbed, it needs the new influences of the Holy Ghost. He heats it with the same fire of love with which He illumines it. Honest men there are who readily admit the experience, but cannot tell its source. "Did not our hearts burn within us by the way ?" said the disciple when recalling the unperceived companionship of their Lord.—*Ibid.*

## 4 He softens.

[13829] He softens the heart that He may impress His own image upon it. As fire melts the wax for a seal, so the Holy Spirit prepares our moral nature for a new and eminent likeness of Himself. Thus believers become living epistles of Christ, authenticated by the image they bear, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God, and read of all men. What is called "the earnest of our inheritance" is this state of being sealed after we have believed—sealed by the Holy Spirit according to the promise. This is what furnishes the witness of the Spirit with our spirits that we are Christ's. It is our privilege to be called the friends of God. And the necessity presses likewise : "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." But so wilful is our depraved nature that we are apt to sturdily resist the influences which evidence His nearness. Hence the impressive admonition, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Truth is the seal, the Holy Ghost applies it. The heart of a believer is the subject. And to seal well and plainly, the wax must be measurably melted beforehand.—*Ibid.*

## 2

## OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST, INDIVIDUALLY CONSIDERED.

### (1)

### QUICKENING.

#### I. ITS NATURE.

#### 1 A calling forth of the principle of life.

[13830] It is with the seed which produces the fruit of the spirit precisely as with that which springs from the earth, or at least in quite a similar way. The seed is not immediately from God or from nature ; it must go through all the processes necessary to bring it by degrees to

maturity; and if man, under the most favourable sky and the most fruitful soil, wishes to be secure of his harvest, he must bestow his labour and the "sweat of his brow." This is still more the case with the fruit of the spirit and of the heart, but the certainty of the harvest is still greater.—*Anon.*

[13831] The mode in which the Holy Spirit acts upon and influences the soul of man may be presumed to be somewhat analogous to, and correspondent with, the manner in which the sun acts upon and influences the material being, and growth, and vitality, of plants and animals; silently and imperceptibly, but at the same time most powerfully, invigorating and inspiring them, and calling forth latent energies and dormant powers.—*G. Harris.*

## II. ITS NECESSITY.

I No power can be exercised without a vital principle.

[13832] As a natural death doth incapacitate for natural actions, so a spiritual death must incapacitate for spiritual actions. Otherwise, in what sense can it be called a death, if a man in a state of nature were as capable of performing spiritual actions as one in a state of grace? As Adam could not stir to perform any action, though his body was framed and perfected, till God breathed into him a living soul, so neither can we stir spiritually till God breathe into us a living grace. Spiritual motions can no more be without a spiritual life than bodily motions can be without an enlivening soul.—*S. Charnock, B.D.*

[13833] As the earth cannot bring forth fruit or flower without wind, though it has rain and dew, so it is impossible for the Christian to bring forth fruit, though he receive the dew and rain of sound doctrine, unless he receive the breathing of the Holy Spirit.—*St. Chrysostom.*

## III. ITS TESTS.

[13834] If iron move upward contrary to its nature, 'tis a sign some loadstone hath been there drawing it. If the soul move towards God, in unfeigned desires, it's a sign the loadstone of the Spirit hath been drawing it.

[13835] Motion in one form or another is the first sign of life; and where there is any real movement heavenward, there hath the life-giving Spirit quickened a dead soul.—*M. J.*

## IV. ITS POWER.

[13836] In proof that his newly-departed Master had sent down the Holy Ghost, Peter had nothing to appeal to but one unique and startling phenomenon just happening in his hearers' presence. He had the rushing noise, the flames of fire, the foreign tongues. We have the gathered spiritual experience of eighteen

centuries. Not an age of man has passed since Peter without leaving tokens that to the gospel belongs a heavenly power.—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

[13837] As we see on every hand the indubitable marks of the power of God, we cannot refrain from exclaiming—"What hath God wrought!" Churches and ministers have been quickened to a deeper and more intense spiritual life; many who have listened to the Word of God for years have been led to seek and find Christ; the undecided among the young have resolved to consecrate themselves to the Lord; backsliders have been reclaimed, and restored to the consciousness of the joys of salvation; the careless and the hardened have heard the voice of God, and been troubled, and many have given heed to things which pertain to their peace; prodigals and wanderers from the Father have come back with the language of confession on their lip and contrition in their heart; Christian work, which languished and was feeble, has had infused through it a new vitality; and the faith of God's people in the power of prayer, and of the Word to save sinners, has been revived and strengthened to such an extent that in many a heart there has been a re-consecration of self to God and to His work.—*Skerry.*

[13838] We believe this day the resurrection of the dead, and an undoubted accomplishment of that truth which to natural reason would seem a strange contradiction. But should we not consider that the same truth, though in a spiritual way, yet most visibly and upon a higher account, is verified before our eyes; how it is sure such are quickened and brought to life who were dead in their sins, were past feeling, yea, for many years have lain as in a cold grave, without sense of God or their own case, who in one moment, at the voice of the word, have been made to stir and arise? And is not this something as discernibly above nature, or the influence of second causes, yea, as marvellous an act of Divine power as the resurrection of the dead in the last day, which seems to some such a dark and strange thing to believe? (John v. 25, xi. 25; Eph. v. 14.)—*Fleming.*

(2)

## AWAKENING.

### I. ITS NATURE.

[13839] It is a waking up of mind which can never be described in words, but can only be illustrated by reference to analogous experiences. Who knows not the difference between seeing objects and paying attention to them?—Nay, between attending to objects and being personally interested in them?—Nay, between being interested in them as means, and absorbed in them as ends? It has even become proverbial to speak of seeing, and yet not seeing; hearing and yet not hearing; because there may be per-

ception without remarking and taking notice of—that is, without a consciousness of the perceptive act accompanying the perception, and associating it with other thoughts, and thereby giving to it relation and place in our memory. Such a noticing of religious truths is the first act of a real attention.—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

## II. ITS NECESSITY.

[13840] Men are naturally indifferent to God: this is the first broad fact of our fallen condition, which the slightest observation may convince us of. They need, therefore, as the first step to salvation, to have their attention awakened to Him; this is the conclusion of reason from the observation of that obvious fact. And the excitement of this attention is the work of God—this is the assertion of Scripture in answer to the demands of that need.—*Ibid.*

[13841] If a man is to be converted, he must, by the leadings of God's grace (outward and inner leadings), be awakened to a living knowledge of the law of God, must above all come to the knowledge of the first and great commandment, that he may thereby be brought to know his sin and guilt, to know that his root-evil lies in the position he occupies to God, which his previous knowledge of the law did not let him see. But it is equally needful that he be awakened to get a clear view of the gospel, if he is not to despair about his sin. Both are wrought by the word of God.—*Bp. Martensen.*

## III. ITS MEANS.

[13842] Christian preaching is the means ordained by God to this end, and whose chief mark is this, that it does not consist in enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (1 Cor. ii. 4).—*Ibid.*

[13843] Who can hear in a receptive hour Christ's Sermon on the Mount without feeling deep pain within him at his infinite distance from these requirements, without feeling that these tones, these blessings, come from regions that are our true home, but from which we are far removed, as outcasts in the far country; that, to fulfil these requirements, a thorough change must take place in us; that the only thing possible to us is the feeling of an unutterable internal poverty, the feeling that our own righteousness, our stoical ideals, our æsthetic education, our moderate morality, are a wretched nullity, in which we must feel a hunger and thirst after a better righteousness.—*Ibid.*

[13844] It is by the double influence of the objective truth and the subjective operation of the Spirit of God that the religious life or consciousness is awakened within.—*J. McCosh, D.D.*

## IV. ITS EFFECTS.

[13845] The effect of this awakening is that

the general ideas of God, and Christ, and sinfulness, and danger, and pardon, and obedience, and heaven, and hell, are brought into particular relation to our self—our own individual being—assuming thus a magnitude, a reality, and a solemnity they never had before. God, in a word, confronted with our soul; and, therefore, our relation to Him, dependence upon Him, obligations, negligences, and rebellions towards Him—our whole dissimilarity from His tremendous majesty and holiness—flashing on us in a light bright as the sun at noonday, and revealing to us at the same time the imperative necessity of some *personal transaction* between us and Him in order to our safety and our peace.—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

[13846] Following awakening comes the springing up of thoughts we never knew before; the opening of a prospect into which we never hitherto had looked; the sinking of the present and the visible before the mighty forms of spiritual objects looming in the awful distance; the throwing forth the spirit out of one world into another; the passing onward into a new hemisphere lighted by new stars, and bright with fruits and flowers before unknown.—*Ibid.*

[13847] Awakened sinners are found able to believe in pardon, and to receive the hope of eternal life, when these are presented to them in connection with the sacrifice of Himself by which Christ put away sin, becoming the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.—*J. McLeod Campbell, D.D.*

[13848] When the Spirit of God awakens a soul to attend to the things that belong to its peace, it is instantly led to the contemplation of objects out of sight, "things not seen as yet;" it is the eternal world, the future destiny of the soul, the judgment-seat of Christ, the misery of the damned, the blessedness and glory of the saved—these are the things which engage the awakened soul's contemplation, things which the world thinks so little about, through practical unbelief and engagement with present things.—*G. Townshend Fox, M.A.*

[13849] The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and the result in the case of a newly awakened man, whose experience is only legal, is, that he is brought to a standstill. He finds his will paralyzed, because it is drawn in contrary directions. The flesh and the Spirit distract him, so that (*or in order that, ἵνα μὴ*) he cannot do the things that he would (Gal. v. 17).—*J. B. Heard, M.A.*

## V. ITS EVIDENTIAL MARKS.

[13850] The first mark of an awakened conscience is this, that it will not allow the demands of the law to be disposed of by evasions. Instead of treating the ceremonial law as a set-off to the moral, it sees that the latter is, of the two, the most important—that "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of



rams." Brought to this conviction, it cannot regard with its former complacency those breaches of the moral law which once were indulgently passed over. A great change comes over its view of the law of God. The commandment which was ordained unto life it finds to be unto death. It is drawn by a fatal attraction towards that very law which only discovers our sin, and, through the commandment, makes that sin to appear exceeding sinful. Then a horrible dread begins to overwhelm the spirit. We were alive once without the law—alive, that is, in the lower sense of the word—living a natural life in the flesh, feeling no great attraction to God, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, feeling no great dread of sin or fear of displeasing Him. Now this state of insensibility is over.—*Ibid.*

[13851] Awakened, we can deceive ourselves no longer, either as to the necessity of strict and entire obedience, or as to the reality in us of an evil heart of sin and unbelief. Thus the spirit, on its first awakening, is drawn by two opposite attractions—one towards, the other averse from God.—*Ibid.*

#### VI. ITS DISTINCTION FROM REGENERATION.

[13852] Regeneration must not be confounded with awakening, though there is a striking similarity between them, and they are often blended together in real life. Awakening precedes regeneration, but it does not constitute it. Awakening is certainly a work of grace, affecting the entire personality of the man, raising his consciousness to a higher religious state—a state to which he could not raise himself by his own natural powers merely, and in which he is brought out of the wonted sphere of his psychologic life.—*Bp. Martensen.*

#### VII. ITS WARNINGS.

[13853] When the blessed Spirit, that bloweth where it listeth, visits you and stirs the plumage of the soul, seek no cowardly shelter from it, but fling yourself upon it, and, though its sweep be awful, you shall be sustained. Only do this, do all, not in presumptuous daring, but in Divine submission; in dependence, not on any strength that can be spent, but on the ever-living stay of all that trust in Him.—*James Martineau.*

[13854] The time of awakening is the critical and jeopardous point in the progress of man's conversion. For here he is placed in that critical and testing position in which he may resist grace. He may be unwilling to surrender himself self-denyingly to the obedience of truth, although he was willing for a season to rejoice in its light (John v. 35); or by indolence he may let slip and lose the acceptable time of grace; or by self-will he may arrest the awakening in its progress, instead of letting it lead him on to regeneration. Here it is that extravagant enthusiasm or fanaticism reigns.—*Bp. Martensen.*

#### (3)

#### INTERCEDING.

##### I. NATURE OF THE SPIRIT'S INTERCESSION.

[13855] In explanation of this doctrine, it is not to be understood as importing, that the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us in His own person, or that He directly addresses His prayer to the Father on our behalf. Christ, as Mediator, prayed for His disciples while He was yet on earth, and He still makes continual intercession for them in heaven, by appearing in the presence of God for them; but the Holy Spirit is never represented in Scripture as interceding in the same way, either by offering up His own personal request, or by appearing for us at the throne.—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

[13856] The Spirit maketh intercession for us, not as Christ doth in heaven, but by "helping our infirmities;" that is, by directing our intentions, by strengthening our faith, by exciting our desires, by supplying us, not, as some vainly imagine, with words, but "with groanings which cannot be uttered;" with such fervent and earnest affections which no words are able to express, and none can know but He that "searcheth the hearts, and knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit."—*Bp. Beveridge.*

[13857] The mother cannot describe her ecstasy as she hangs over her first-born; the child cannot tell his mother how much he loves her; the grateful mendicant can only look and bow and sob when he has been relieved from ruin—so too, in our sensibilities towards God, many a reverent complacency in His goodness and His truth, many a real affection for His will and His service, many a psalm of the heart for His seasonable bounty, will be too profound for the human voice. They "cannot be uttered." There is no sound articulate for them. But the Spirit sustains them in their pure ideality, and thus they become prayers which are intelligible to Christ.—*Joseph Sortain, B.A.*

##### II. NECESSITY OF THE SPIRIT'S AID IN PRAYER.

[13858] If any one doubt the necessity of the Spirit's aid in the exercise of prayer, there is enough in the words of the apostle to convince him of his error; for even an inspired man, classing himself along with other believers, says, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought."—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

[13859] "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." They might be infirmities arising from our limited knowledge about ourselves, and thus might dictate prayers which, if granted, would seriously disorder our personal development of character and our personal usefulness.

They might be infirmities arising from the emotion of the moment, and thus might dictate prayers which, if granted, would realize the bewildered behests of passion. They might be infirmities arising from our ignorance of life at large, and thus might dictate prayers which, if granted, would confound the just interests of others, nay, subvert the course of the moral universe. "We know not what to pray for as we ought." But there is an Omniscient and an Omnipresent mind ever able and ever prompt to help us in this our imbecility. And He can and does enlarge the ken of our individuality of the moment. He can and does reduce the phantasies of our spirit into soberness. He can and does teach us that spiritual selfishness is folly. "He helpeth our infirmities,"—*Joseph Sornain, B.A.*

### III. OPERATIONS OF THE INTERCEDING SPIRIT.

[13860] The apostle has spoken of the men in whom are the first fruits of the Spirit as "groaning within themselves," as waiting in hope for the redemption of the body; and this groaning within ourselves corresponds to the "groanings which cannot be uttered." He then passes on to say, "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit," and all this points to the interpretation that the Holy Spirit, in the soul, pleads as the author of prayer. His idea seems, therefore, to be this—There is a spirit within you, possessing you, which gives rise to longings earnest and unutterable—that is the Holy Spirit within, interceding with God.—*E. L. Hull, B.A.*

[13861] He intercedes by "dwelling in us" as "the Spirit of grace and supplication"—disposing and enabling us to pray for ourselves. He is the Spirit of supplication, just as He is the Spirit of faith, and repentance, and hope. He is the author of these spiritual graces—the source whence they flow, and by which they are continually sustained. Yet they exist in the believer, and are exercised by him, so as to form part of his own personal character; and just so the Spirit is said to make intercession for us, when He stirs us up to intercede for ourselves, and gives us grace to desire and to ask what blessings we severally require. — *J. Buchanan, D.D.*

[13862] In this, as in every other part of His work, He acts by the use of means, and in a way that is wisely adapted to the rational and moral nature with which we are endowed. He acts upon us, not as mere machines, but as moral agents; and by various considerations and motives He teaches and disposes us to pray. Every part of His work as the Spirit of grace has a tendency to prepare us for this exercise; for whether He act as a reprover, convincing us of sin—or as a sanctifier, subduing our corruptions—or as a comforter, giving us peace and joy in believing—or as a teacher,

enlarging our views of Divine truth, and confirming our faith in it—all the operations of His grace are subversive more or less directly to the exercise of prayer.—*Ibid.*

(4)

### ENLIGHTENING.

#### I. ITS DEFINITION AND NATURE.

[13863] Enlightenment (*φωτισμός, illuminatio*) is that operation of the Holy Spirit by which the sinner is brought primarily and successively to a clearer knowledge of the truth in Christ.—*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*

[13864] This work of illumination or enlightening, it is that, whereby the Spirit first purgeth the mind and understanding from darkness and vanity, which was in it through ignorance of God; also the judgment from that perverse corruption of it in things belonging to God, whereby it could not put a difference between good and evil; and secondly, putteth into the understanding and judgment a new light of knowledge and discretion, whereby the soul knoweth and discerneth aright the truth of salvation by Christ, even particularly in the several doctrines. This enlightening is twofold. The first is general and slight, whereby the mind is enlightened unto an idle and unfruitful knowledge of God. The latter is a special and thorough enlightening unto a diligent and profitable understanding of Christ.—*T. Wilson.*

#### II. ITS INSTRUMENT.

[13865] The Word of God is the *instrument*, the Spirit of God is the *agent*, in this great work of illumination. The Bible is the text-book, but the Spirit is Himself the teacher. He is not only the author of that book, but the interpreter of it also, who guides us into a knowledge of its truths. He puts the Bible into our hands, as a "light unto our feet and a lamp unto our path;" but, knowing that we are naturally blind, and cannot see afar off, He opens our eye and shines into our heart. All the truth which the Spirit ever teaches is *in* the Word; but never would it find *entrance* into our hearts unless He put it there. The Word is a *sword*—a sharp two-edged sword; but its efficacy depends on this—that it is the sword of the Spirit.—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

[13866] Sometimes this great work is accomplished "by secret and immediate impressions from God upon the mind," without any visible means, instruments, or occasions at all. These things do not frequently happen; nor does it seem fit they should, lest any should be encouraged to expect them in the neglect of the appointed means. Nevertheless it is plain, in fact, that God is sometimes pleased to go out of the common way; and His mighty hand is to be acknowledged in it. The reasons are known

to Himself; and the praise is humbly to be ascribed to Him, who giveth not an account of any of His matters.—*P. Doddridge, D.D.*

### III. ITS MYSTERIOUS PROCESS.

[13867] I have known those of distinguished genius, polite manners, and great experience in human affairs, who, after having outgrown all the impressions of a religious education; after having been hardened, rather than subdued, by the most singular mercies, even various, repeated, and astonishing deliverances, which have appeared to themselves no less than miraculous; after having lived for years without God in the world, notoriously corrupt themselves, and labouring to the utmost to corrupt others, have been stopped on a sudden in the full career of their sin, and have felt such rays of the Divine presence, and of redeeming love, darting in upon their minds, almost like lightning from heaven.—*Ibid.*

[13868] It is difficult to determine, by the eye, the precise moment of daybreak; but the light advances from early dawn, and the sun arises at the appointed hour. Such is the progress of Divine light in the mind; the first streaks of the dawn are seldom perceived, but, by degrees, objects till then unthought of are disclosed. The evil of sin, the danger of the soul, the reality and importance of eternal things, are apprehended, and a hope of mercy, through a crucified Saviour, is discovered, which prevents the sinner from falling into absolute despair; but for a time all is indistinct and confused. But the light increases, the sun arises, the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ shines in upon the soul. As the sun can be seen only by its own light, and diffuses that light by which other objects are clearly perceived, so Christ crucified is the sun in the system of revealed truth, and the right knowledge of the doctrines of His cross satisfies the inquiring mind, and proves itself to be the "one thing needful."—*H. G. Salter, M.A.*

### IV. ITS SPECIAL SUBJECTS.

[13869] 1. The meek and tractable (Prov. xxv. 9; Matt. xi. 26). 2. The poor and humble (1 Cor. i. 26, 27). 3. The prayerful (Luke xi. 1). 4. The obedient (John vii. 17).—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

### V. ITS SPECIAL METHOD.

[13870] Christ, by His Spirit, enlightens the soul of man, as the sun enlightens the atmosphere around us. The air, of itself, is dark; the light that pervades it is not its own; but yet there would be no light without the atmosphere, for the sun makes use of it in order to disperse his rays. And just so the Holy Spirit employs, while He quickens, the faculties of the human soul.—*J. E. Riddle.*

### VI. ITS NECESSITY.

#### 1 Is unquestionable for the right understanding of Scripture.

[13871] The Scripture resembles a sun-dial, which is in itself perfect and complete, graven with all the hours, and with a gnomon which casts an exact shadow. But the indispensable condition of the sun-dial's usefulness is light. On a cloudy day, in the twilight and at midnight, the sun-dial avails not to inform us of the time. Even so the Scripture is "able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." It is the chart of the road to glory, on which every shoal, and beacon, and lighthouse, every sounding, every latitude and longitude, is marked with unerring accuracy. But the one indispensable condition of the Scripture's answering its end is, that the Spirit, while we read it, shall be shining in upon the heart. Without such shining, the word itself must be a dead letter to us—a barren series of doctrines and principles, without beauty and significance.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[13872] Although the Scriptures themselves are written by the Spirit of God, yet they are written within and without; and, besides the light that shines on the face of them, unless there be a light shining within our hearts, unfolding the leaves, and interpreting the mysterious sense of the Spirit, convincing our consciences and preaching to our hearts, to look for Christ in the leaves of the gospel, is to "look for the living amongst the dead." There is a life in them, but that life is, according to St. Paul's expression, "hid with Christ in God;" and, unless the Spirit of God be the *promotendus*, we shall never draw it forth.—*Lp. Jeremy Taylor.*

#### 2 Is not invalidated by intellectual knowledge.

[13873] We may know *about* God without knowing God. We may hear of Him by the hearing of the ear, and yet our eye may not see Him. There is a traditional knowledge of God as "the God of our fathers," which is not much more efficacious than that which even the heathen enjoyed who, "*when they knew God, glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*" It is like the knowledge that we may possess of our forefathers—their names and relation to us, and some dim tradition of their doings; as compared with that which we enjoy of our immediate parents, whose sentiments and character are every day displayed to us. The Jews of old, with all their manifold advantages, were thus ignorant of God. "Ye say, indeed," says Jesus to them, "that He is your God; yet ye have not known Him:—He that sent me is true, whom ye know not." Too many, even of the early Christians also, blessed as they were with the fuller light which streamed from Christ, were thus ignorant of God. "They profess that



they know God," says St. Paul, "but in works they deny Him." And St. John solemnly warns all such self-deceivers, "He that saith I know God and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

[13874] Oh, it is an awful thing to have the intellect enlightened while the heart remains dark and cold! To be familiar with the sound of truth, but never to have unclosed our eyes to look upon the truth itself! To be "groping at noonday as the blind gropeth in darkness!" "This," says our Lord, "is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil!"—*Ibid.*

[13875] The Pharisees had "the form of knowledge in the law;" they were the great theologians under the Old Testament. Yet our Lord declares, that, studious and instructed as they were, and capable of expounding the writings of Moses, they did not really *know* God, nor understand the writings of Moses. Simon Magus must have had some correct notional acquaintance with the leading truths of the gospel, and must have been able to put them forth in intelligible propositions, when he made that profession of faith which the apostles themselves regarded as a sufficient ground for his admission to the sacrament of baptism. Yet he had not been spiritually enlightened, for "he was still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." So our Lord Himself speaks of some who hear the Word, and anon with *joy* receive it. They not only have some notion of its meaning, but some impressions of its power; yet they have not the "light of life." They are like Herod, who feared John, and heard him gladly.—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

[13876] The great discriminating test of the difference betwixt the natural and spiritual knowledge of Divine truth is to be found in its practical influence and actual fruits. Spiritual light is accompanied with life and love—it is vital and powerful, transforming, renewing, purifying the soul in which it dwells; for if we behold the glory of God, we are thereby changed into the same image; we love what we discern to be good, we admire what we perceive to be excellent, we imitate and become conformed to what we love and admire; it is not a cold light like that of the moon or stars, but a lively light, accompanied with heat and warmth—vivifying, fructifying; it attunes all the faculties of the soul for the service of God, like the light that fell on the statue of Memnon, and awoke the chords of his sleeping lyre.—*Ibid.*

## VII. ITS EFFECTS.

### I It strengthens the mind.

[13877] A marked change passes over the human mind when the heart is renewed by the influences of God's Spirit. We are not guilty

of the absurdity of maintaining that there are supernaturally communicated any of those stores of information which are ordinarily gained by a patient and painstaking application. A man will not become more of an astronomer than he was before, nor more of a chemist, nor more of a linguist. . . . But there is a wide difference between the strengthening of the mind and the storing it with information. We may plead for the former effect without at all supposing the latter. . . . We assert that, in all cases, a man is intellectually as well as spiritually advantaged in becoming a man of piety. He will have a clearer and less biased judgment. His views will be wider, his estimates more correct. His understanding, having been exercised on truths the most stupendous, will be more competent for the examination of what is difficult or obscure. His reason, having learned that much lies beyond her province, as well as much within, will give herself to inquiries with greater humility and greater caution, and therefore, almost to a moral certainty, with greater success. And though we may thus seem rather to account for the fact than to prove it, let it be remembered that this fact, being an effect, can only be established either by pointing out causes or by appealing to experience. The appeal to experience is perhaps the more correct mode of the two; and we therefore content ourselves with saying, that those who have watched character most narrowly will bear out the statement that the opening of God's Word is followed ordinarily by a surprising opening of man's faculties.—*Henry Melvill.*

[13878] If an individual have heretofore been obtuse and unintelligent, let him be converted, and there shall hereafter be commonly a quickness and animation; so that religion, whose prime business it is to shed light upon the heart, shall appear at the same time to have thrown fire into the eye.—*Ibid.*

[13879] We do not, indeed, assert that genius and talent are imparted with the new heart; but that it is amongst the characteristics of godliness, that it elevates man in the scale of intellectual being; that it makes him a more thinking, and a more inquiring, and a more discriminating creature; that it both rectifies and strengthens the mental vision—we are guilty of no exaggeration if we contend for this as universally true; and this, if not more than this, is asserted in the statement that "the entrance of God's words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple."—*Ibid.*

[13880] There is in the Christian a light which in the unbeliever there is not; and this light he knows, from his own consciousness, has not been discovered—it is revealed; it is not his own conjecture, but the truth which has come to him from heaven. It is the light that shows him "things not seen," that brings the distant near; that gives to the future the value of the present; that enables him to set the realities of eternity against the vanities of time,

and to see how dim the brightest things of earth become when contrasted with the glories of heaven.—*W. H. Stowell.*

[13881] We pray not only that we may "rejoice evermore in His holy comfort," but also that "by the same Spirit we may have a right judgment in all things.—*M. J.*

**2 It sanctifies the soul and consecrates the life.**

[13882] If the Spirit of God be our teacher, we shall learn to avoid evil and to do good, to be wise and to be holy, to be profitable and careful: and they that walk in this way shall find more peace in their consciences, more skill in the Scriptures, more satisfaction in their doubts, than can be obtained by all the polemical and impertinent disputations of the world. And if the Holy Spirit can teach us how vain a thing it is to do foolish things, He also will teach us how vain a thing it is to trouble the world with foolish questions, to disturb the Church for interest or pride, to resist government in things indifferent, to spend the people's zeal in things unprofitable, to make religion to consist in outside, and opposition to circumstances, and trifling regards.—*Bp. Jeremy Taylor.*

[13883] He that is conducted by the Spirit of God knows better in what Christ's kingdom does consist, than to throw away his time and interest, and peace and safety—for what? for religion? no: for the body of religion? not so much; for the garment of the body of religion? no, not for so much; but for the fringes of the garment of the body of religion; for such and no better are the disputes that trouble our discontented brethren; they are things, or rather circumstances and manners of things, in which the soul and spirit are not at all concerned.—*Ibid.*

**VIII. ITS RELATION TO THE SPIRIT'S KINDRED OPERATIONS.**

[13884] The illuminating work of the Holy Spirit may be said to be the groundwork of all His other operations; for it is by the truth known and believed that the Spirit fulfils all the functions of His glorious office.—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

[13885] By enlightening the mind in the knowledge of sin He lays a groundwork for the conviction of conscience; by enabling us to see the import and meaning of the gospel He proposes motives for *conversion*; by teaching us right views of God and of ourselves, our privileges and prospects, He supplies us with means of *comfort*; by showing us the nature and necessity of gospel holiness He carries forward the work of *sanctification*; by disclosing to us scriptural views of our spiritual necessities He calls first the *Spirit of prayer*, and, secondly, He doth whatever He is wont to do by means of the knowledge of the truth.—*Ibid.*

(5)

**CONVICTING OF SIN.**

**I. NATURE OF THE CONVICTION OF SIN.**

[13886] The work of conviction, of which the conscience is the subject, the Spirit the author, and the light of truth the means, consists in impressing the soul with a sense of its own sinfulness, and exciting in it some suitable feelings of fear, and shame, and self-condemnation.—*Ibid.*

[13887] It is a conviction (1) of the *fact* of sin as an awful reality in our own personal experience, (2) of the *power* of sin, as an inveterate evil cleaving to us continually, and having its roots in the innermost recesses of our hearts, (3) of the *guilt* of sin, past as well as present, as an offence against God, which, once committed, can never cease to be true of us individually, and which, however He may be pleased to deal with it, has deserved His wrath and righteous condemnation.—*Ibid.*

[13888] To convince the world of sin is to produce a living and lively sense of it, to teach what it is, to lay it bare under all its masks, to trace it through all the mazes of its web, and to light on it sitting in the midst thereof, to show it to a man, not merely as it flashes forth ever and anon in the overt actions of his neighbours, but as it lies smouldering inextinguishably within his own bosom, to give him a torch whereby he may explore the dark chambers of his own heart, to lead him into them, and to open his eyes so that he shall behold some of sin's countless brood crouching or gambolling in every corner.—*Archdeacon Hare.*

[13889] To convince a man of sin, by proving to him that it lies at the bottom of all his feelings, and blends with all his thoughts, that the bright coloured stones with which he is so fond of decking himself out, and which he takes such delight in gazing at, are only so many bits of brittle worthless glass; and that what he deems to be stars are earthborn meteors, which merely glimmer for the moment they are falling; to convince the world of sin, by showing it how sin has tainted its heart, and flows through all its veins, and is mixed up with its life-blood—this is a work which no earthly power can accomplish, No human teacher can do it.—*Ibid.*

[13890] Conscience cannot truly and perfectly convince of sin. Law in none of its forms, human or Divine, can do it. Nay, the gospel itself cannot do it. Although the word of God is the sword of the Spirit, yet, unless the Spirit of God draws forth that sword, it lies powerless in its sheath.—*Ibid.*

**II. RELATION OF THIS WORK OF THE SPIRIT TO THAT OF ENLIGHTENMENT.**

[13891] Conviction presupposes some measure

of the enlightening grace of the Spirit—imparting a general view of the truth as it is in Jesus, and enabling the mind to perceive the Divine evidence of that truth, so as to feel that it is deeply criminal in slighting or rejecting it; and when it is said, therefore, that in the order of nature and experience conviction is the first part of the Spirit's work, or the first stage in that process by which He brings a sinner to the Saviour, it is not meant that the Spirit operates directly and only on the conscience, so as to awaken in it a sense of sin, but that He operates on the conscience by imparting such light to the understanding as reaches the conscience, and quickens its perception, and enables it to see and feel that there is sin and danger in not believing in Christ.—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

### III. THE DIFFERING INTENSITY OF THIS CONVICTION IN DIFFERENT CHARACTERS.

[13892] The keenness of the consciousness of sin depends upon temperament, and upon the general complexion of natural character. Luther, *e.g.*, during the period of his conversion, often wrote to Staupitz, "Oh, my sins, my sins!" and yet in the confessional he could name no actual sins in particular.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[13893] As the strength of the sense of sin is conditioned by the psychological possibilities of the individual, it is also influenced to a great extent by diversities in the previous life. The woman who was a sinner, and who anointed Jesus, experienced the stings of conscience on account of sin in a manner very different from the pure maiden, the Mary who sat at the feet of Jesus, and heard His word concerning the "one thing needful;" though they both had essentially the same need of redemption.—*Ibid.*

[13894] How different is the conversion of Paul, which was attended with a very deep agitation of soul—trembling and astonishment—from that of a Nathanael or a John, in whom the change from the old to the new man was imperceptible, and without any sudden revolution of soul! And yet in them, equally with Paul, the most thorough transformation of personal character and life took place; so that we cannot unconditionally give the preference to either mode of conversion as superior to the other.—*Ibid.*

[13895] The main point in conversion is its thoroughness—I mean the reality of the change in the relations between the holy and the worldly principle; and this can be realized, according to the peculiarities of different individuals, quite as well as by the still and hidden movement of the inner man, as by violent agitations.—*Ibid.*

### IV. ITS PRINCIPAL MEANS AND VARIED METHODS.

[13896] The principal means of conviction is

the law—the law of God in its purity, spirituality, and power; for "by the law is the knowledge of sin," and "the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." The law in its holy commandment—the law in its awful curse—the law in its spiritual nature, as reaching to the heart, and in all its length and breadth as extending over every department of human life—the law in its condemning power, whereby "every mouth must be stopped, and all the world must become guilty before God;"—this law is unfolded to the understanding, and applied to the conscience by the Holy Spirit, and immediately, by its own self-evidencing light, it convinces; the conscience is constrained to do homage to the law, and to acknowledge that "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good;" while self-convicted and self-condemned, the sinner exclaims, "But I am carnal, sold under sin."—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

[13897] Around the Sermon on the Mount, or the last discourse in the upper room, there is an unearthly atmosphere of purity and holiness, which lights up in the soul, with microscopic distinctness, the consciousness of secret evil, more perfectly than could any code of precepts. And as we gaze on Him, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, in His purity, His courage, His humility, His tenderness, His majestic moral strength, His fearless loyalty to truth, His vast charity, we see that which reveals us to ourselves. At the feet of the Lamb without blemish and immaculate, we feel, with Job, that the report of God's sanctity has been at length exchanged for sight; we exclaim with the apostle, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."—*Canon Liddon.*

[13898] The work of conviction may be commenced and carried on in various ways. Sometimes it comes on a hardened sinner in advanced life like a sudden flash of lightning from heaven; sometimes it is implanted, like a seed, in the soul of a child, which grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength. Sometimes it is occasioned by one gross actual sin, which overwhelms the mind with a sense of its guilt and danger; at other times, by a calm review of the whole of a man's experience, which impresses his mind with a sense of the radical corruption of his nature. Sometimes the sins of youth are recalled and set in order before him; at other times his neglect of gospel grace, his forgetfulness of prayer, his misimprovement of privileges, his frequent declensions, his broken resolutions, his unfulfilled engagements, his unsanctified sabbaths, his ingratitude for mercies, his inattention to the voice of judgment or of mercy, a fit of sickness, or the dangerous illness of a wife or friend, or the thought of death, or a vivid view of God's justice or of the Saviour's love—in any one or all of these various ways, sound conviction may be wrought in the conscience.—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*



## V. ITS UNIVERSAL NECESSITY.

## 1 It is necessary to the spiritual life, and to the attainment of salvation.

[13899] A man must feel himself in misery before he will go about to find a remedy; be sick before he will seek the physician; be in prison before he will sue for a pardon; be wounded before he will prize a plaster and precious balsam. A sinner must be weary of his former wicked ways, and tired with legal terror, before he will have recourse to Jesus Christ for refreshing, and lay down his bleeding soul in His blessed bosom; he must be sensible of his spiritual poverty, beggary, and slavery under the devil before he thirst kindly for heavenly righteousness, and willingly take up Christ's sweet and easy yoke. He must be cast down, confounded, condemned, a castaway, and lost in himself, before he will look about for a Saviour; he must cry heartily, "I am unclean, I am unclean," before he will long, and labour to wash in that most sovereign and soul-saving fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness; he must sell all before he will be willing and eager to buy the treasure hid in the field.—*R. Bolton.*

[13900] The waters that are whirled round by the mill wheel cannot hear the lark singing to them from the heavens; nor can we, when we are tossed and dashed about by the world's never resting wheel, hear the voice of the witness that God has set for Himself in our hearts.—*Archdeacon Hare.*

[13901] Unless man were convinced of sin, the salvation wrought by Christ would be of no effect. Without this conviction by the Spirit, in vain would the Son of God have come in the flesh; in vain would He have died on the cross for the sins of mankind; mankind would not, could not have been saved. They could not because they would not.—*Ibid.*

[13902] Unless a man be well aware that he is labouring under a disease, he will not think of asking for the remedies which might cure him; nor will he take them, although you hold them out to him, and although their efficacy may have been proved in a multitude of cases, more especially if they happen to be distasteful to his vitiated palate. If he mistakes the convulsive fits of a fever for the vigour of health, he will not consent to practise that abstinence by which his fever might be subdued. Nor, unless we are fully convinced that our souls are tormented by a deadly, clinging disease, and that no earthly power or skill can heal them, shall we think of applying earnestly for health to the only physician of souls.—*Ibid.*

## 2 It is necessary because of the impotency of conscience.

[13903] We have the voice of conscience sighing through every fresh crack that we make

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in God's image in our hearts, and conspiring with our reason and imagination, and every other noble faculty, to admonish us that we are betraying our duty, that we are outraging our better feelings, that we are marring our true aboriginal nature; to admonish us that we are polluting our souls and withering and rotting our hearts. But is this enough to convince a man of sin? Alas! conscience is so wasted by yearlong neglect, and crushed by reiterated violation, that it scarcely ever utters its warnings and reproofs, except against fresh overt acts of sin. It seldom takes notice of our habitual sins; still less does it rouse us to contend against that sinfulness which is inwrought in the natural heart. No; conscience assuredly has no power to convince sinners of sin. When she is uttering her most righteous words she often is only casting pearls before swine. The passions of the carnal mind are fretted and irritated by the sight of what is so unlike themselves, and trample them impatiently in the mire.—*Ibid.*

## VI. ITS REAL DIFFICULTY.

[13904] To some this may appear a very easy matter, and one that requires no supernatural agency, since all men will readily admit that they are sinners; and the natural light of conscience itself may seem to be sufficient, especially when combined with the light of the Word, to convince them of their danger. But, easy as it may appear, I apprehend that this is the very stage at which the Divine Spirit meets with the stoutest resistance, and at which the sinner is most resolutely blind to the plainest lessons of the Word. For why is it that so many are found who have listened for years to the joyful sound, while they remain utterly unconcerned about the salvation of their souls, and have never experienced, never even sought after the relief which the gospel offers?—why but that they have never been convinced of their sin and misery, or at least that they have never been so convinced, as to feel that, without Christ, they must perish?—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

[13905] It is an easy thing to say, as many do, that they are weak, frail creatures, or to admit in general terms what conscience itself forbids them to deny, that they are sinners; but it is no easy and no pleasant thing for any man to open his eyes, and to look fairly and fully on his own condition and character as it is exhibited in the light of God's Word, or as one day he shall see it at the judgment-seat of Christ. Such a view of himself would mortify his pride and alarm his fears; and hence he takes refuge in certain general confessions, which have little or no meaning, and which leave his pride unmortified and his fears asleep.—*Ibid.*

## VII. ITS RESULTS AND EFFECTS.

[13906] When the sinner obtains a sight of the evil of sin, and especially of his own sinfulness, his convictions are attended with some

suitable feelings or emotions, such as fear, shame, and self-condemnation. These feelings are the suitable and, in one sense, the natural attendants of conviction. When sin stands disclosed, especially in the light of God's truth, it throws a dark shadow in upon the sinner's soul, which overawes and agitates and terrifies him.—*Ibid.*

[13907] Conviction produces shame; for sin is seen to be a vile and loathsome thing; and the soul, which is covered with sin, is felt to be vile and loathsome too. Conviction produces fear; for a sense of guilt is inseparably connected, through conscience, with a sense of danger; and conviction produces self-condemnation; for it is not in the reproof of another, not even the reproof of God Himself, but such reproof so applied as to become his own decision upon his own case, that conviction for sin consists.—*Ibid.*

### VIII. ITS POSSIBLE DANGERS.

[13908] When convictions are weak, we are tempted to indifference in regard to salvation; when consolations abound, we are too prone to fall into spiritual pride; and when consolations are withheld, and convictions strong, we are apt to sink into despair. This is the temptation to which strong convictions tend. The mind is apt to take a false and exaggerated view of its own sins; for although we can never think too ill of sin, we may charge ourselves unjustly, and make a really false application of Scripture, by regarding every infirmity as a wilful sin, and every wilful sin as a token of utter reprobation.—*Ibid.*

[13909] When conviction is strong, the mind is apt to question whether its sins be pardonable, and its salvation possible, thereby limiting the efficacy of God's grace, and the Saviour's sacrifice, and excluding itself from the means of gospel consolation; nay, like a diseased stomach, it turns the most wholesome food into poison, extracting nothing from the most precious promises, from the freest invitations, from the richest privileges of the gospel, but a soul-withering sense of its own wretchedness in having no interest in them; and, penetrated with the unwarranted idea of its own hopeless condition, it first believes in this fiction of its own fancy, and then raises out of it a thousand imaginary terrors, and dark phantoms of evil.—*Ibid.*

[13910] The one stem or stock of conviction divides into two great branches—one which brings forth the fruit of repentance, and another which ends in the production of final reprobacy. Both may be covered with the buds and blossom of a fair profession; but the fruit is widely different. The contrast betwixt the two is finely exemplified by the opposite effects of the same truth, as declared by Peter and Stephen respectively. When Peter preached, the Jews were "pricked in their hearts," and began to inquire in earnest, *What must we do to be saved?* But when Stephen preached, they were

"cut to the heart," yet they only *gnashed on him with their teeth* (Acts ii. 37, vii. 54).—*Ibid.*

### IX. ITS INCULCATIONS.

[13911] When the cloud appears blackest and most impenetrable, and when conscience or imagination are mustering up their heaviest charges and forebodings, endeavour to believe that there is *One* behind and above the cloud, whose beams of grace will at length break through it, and shine in upon you with a sweeter lustre than ever.—*Ibid.*

[13912] Real conviction produces inward desire; and that desire, expressed before God, is prayer. Let the sinner pour it out before the Lord, nothing doubting. Let him pray, in the assurance that he is warranted and encouraged to do so, and that God will fulfil His own promise by granting his request. Yea, though he be kept long at a distance, and may be tempted to retire under a feeling of disappointment, let him persevere, and wait, and seek: let him knock loud and long at heaven's gate—and take no denial; but wait until God Himself open the door, and a flood of heaven's light burst on his astonished eye: let him pray as fervently as the greatness of his interest demands; and let him pray on until that interest is secured. For never should a sinner leave off the exercise of prayer while the throne of grace is standing, and God, seated on the throne, is waiting to be gracious there!—*Ibid.*

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### CONVERTING.

#### I. NATURE OF TRUE CONVERSION.

[13913] Conversion is at once a turning from and a return, is a thoroughly changed direction of the will through its submission to grace, whereby a man breaks with his past, leaves the way he has hitherto gone, and enters on a *new way to righteousness*. Thus conversion is shown not merely by a man leaving the way of sin, but also in that he leaves that way of virtue in which he had hitherto gone, while he was pursuing a righteousness of the law which he was to gain for himself, whether he saw his life's ideal in a civil righteousness, or in a philosophical righteousness, or in the righteousness of the Pharisees.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[13914] A true thorough conversion of heart lies in a hearty will, perfectly ready to sacrifice all to God. By a hearty will I mean that the will is firmly and irrevocably set to withhold nothing within its control from God, and to submit to whatever crosses we may have to bear, perhaps always, in order to fulfil His will. Such unreserved renunciation and self-devotion are the most real conversion.—*Fénélon.*

[13915] Conversion is a turning or being turned at *any time* from any known sin or degree of imperfection in Divine purity to the

holiness and maturity of life in God that such sinfulness prevents. Any such turning of God is a conversion.—*G. B. Ryley.*

[13916] It is important to understand and remember the distinction between the "new birth" and "conversion," because persons who confuse the two always commit one of two mistakes. Some show their error by saying: "The Church teaches that we are born again in baptism, and therefore conversion cannot be necessary." This because they do not understand that conversion is just what is needed by every one who has fallen into sin after having been baptized. Others, again, not uncommonly declare that "to be born again is the one thing needful, and this is what conversion means; therefore there is no need of baptism." But when we once understand the difference between the two, we readily acknowledge that we need the grace of holy baptism *when we start on our journey through life; and we equally need to be "converted," or turned back again, when we have gone out of the right road and followed the ways of sin.* This, then, is what conversion really is. It is a turning back, or turning round. It means a change of purpose, a change of life; so that one who is "converted" in anything is quite different in that respect from what he was before.—*Rev. D. J. White, M.A.*

[13917] Conversion is attraction or drawing. Our Lord declares that the effect of His death shall be to "draw all men unto Him." Thus the cross of Christ draws and attracts. Conversion is the attraction of the cross, a drawing nigher and nigher to the power that attracts, the Being that draws us, even to God. Uniformly, and without ceasing, it leads men further and further from the world and sin, and brings them nearer and nearer to Christ and to God, until at last they unite, and the convert becomes one with Christ and with God.—*Salter.*

## II. MANNER OF CONVERSION.

[13918] The conversion of man is a work of creative grace, breaking the fetters by which his personality had been held bound under the dominion of this world. But it is equally conditioned by human liberty; man may delay and hinder his conversion (Luke xii. 3, 6-9); and it is in this that the power and danger of liberty appear. But real conversion advances when free will, having surrendered itself to awakening grace, now throws off foreign dominion, in the strength of creative grace which has found place within the man, and breaks forth in all its earlier and normal and living development. It accomplishes this by repentance and faith.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[13919] The idea is erroneous that a man must necessarily be able to date his conversion from some particular moment of time. Narratives of conversion are not wanting, telling us the exact point in the person's life at which the

soul was struck by the lightning flash of grace. But conversion cannot always be traced back to such moments. If, for example, we consider that which happened to Paul on his way to Damascus, it is clear, from the history of the apostle, that he had psychologically been prepared for this moment beforehand; for this is evident from the Divine voice which said to him, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts ix. 5), implying that there had been something in his conscience which in secret witnessed against him and told him he was in the wrong way. Thus, even his conversion was accomplished by a series of different states of mind. So conversion is accomplished, not necessarily in a moment, but occupies a section of the man's life, forming an epoch in his history, of longer or shorter duration in different individuals.—*Ibid.*

[13920] In a certain logical sense conversion must be sudden, inasmuch as it means turning to the Lord, and surely there must be a point of time when a man first turns from his sin to his Saviour; yet, in its ordinary acceptance, conversion is really a complex experience, having in it distinctly marked stages, which may be accomplished in a single day, or a single hour, but which may be separated from each other by intervals of some length.—*J. M. Gibson.*

[13921] We meddle not with the dispute respecting *conversion*, whether and in what sense necessary in all Christians. It is sufficient for our purpose that a very large number of men, even in Christian countries, need to be converted, and that not a few, we trust, have been. The tenet becomes fanatical and dangerous only when rare and extraordinary exceptions are made to be the general rule—when what was vouchsafed to the Apostle of the Gentiles by especial grace and for an especial purpose, viz., a conversion begun and completed in the same moment, is demanded or expected of all men as a necessary sign and pledge of their election.—*S. T. Coleridge.*

## III. ITS SIGNS AND TESTS.

### I. Humility.

[13922] It is said of St. Chrysostom that when asked to state the signs of true conversion, he answered: "The first is humility, the second is humility, and the third is humility." And certainly it is true that one who has not learned to be humble cannot have experienced true conversion. But this is not the popular view of the subject. Those who are regarded by many as "converted" persons are too often the reverse of humble. It is far too common to find them spiritually proud, and fond of self-assertion, living in the spirit of the Pharisee's words: "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are!" Let us be very sure that such persons are living a false and mistaken life; for "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,



and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8). They have yet to learn the very first lesson of the converted life, which is *humility*.—*Rev. D. F. White, M.A.*

## 2 A desire for progress.

[13923] A truly converted man is never satisfied with his present spiritual condition. He is ever longing for greater faith, for more clear knowledge, for more of God's grace to serve Him truly and well. He feels as did St. Paul, when he wrote: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 13, 14). And here popular opinion is at variance with the Word of God; for many so-called "converted" people imagine that their faith is perfect because they accept the chief truths of Christianity; they think that greater knowledge is unnecessary to one who has already "made sure of heaven"; and they too often imagine that diligence in serving God is of less importance than the profession, or possession, of faith.—*Ibid.*

[13924] If a man is as passionate, malicious, resentful, sullen, moody, or morose, after his conversion as before it, what is he converted from or to?—*John Angel James.*

## 3 A regard for the means of grace.

[13925] Those who are in need of this great change are generally careless with regard to the means of grace. Moreover, many who have mistaken excited feelings for conversion show similar carelessness. They do so because they have made the mistake already referred to, namely, that of supposing that God has done all for them, and therefore they have nothing more to do. Believing, perhaps, that their whole nature has been miraculously changed, they imagine that old temptations will no more have power against them, and therefore they do not realize the necessity for seeking constant help and strength in the means of grace. But if our conversion has been true, it will have made us know our weakness, as well as our sinfulness: it will cause us to be ever wishing to increase in holiness and in the fear and love of God; and therefore we shall regularly seek God's help and support in the means of grace.—*Rev. D. F. White, M.A.*

## IV. ITS DISTINCTION FROM REGENERATION.

[13926] Regeneration is a spiritual change; conversion is a spiritual motion. In regeneration there is a power conferred; conversion is the exercise of this power. In regeneration there is given us a principle to turn; conversion is our actual turning: that is the principle whereby we are brought out of a state of nature into a state of grace, and conversion the actual

fixing on God, as the *terminus ad quem*. One gives *posse agere*, the other *actu agere*.—*Char-nock.*

## V. ITS OPPOSITE.

[13927] What is the opposite of conversion? It is a terrible word, because God is our only Lord, our Hope, our All; but it is, you know, *aversion*. If we are not turned *to* God, we are turned *away* from Him. It is a terrible word, because it is so outspoken, so true, and God is so good. Yet God tells us plainly what we are doing. But is it not so true? Is there any thought which men so try to get rid of, unless they are obeying Him, as the thought of God? For it is the thought of a Master who is disobeyed; a Father who is dishonoured; a Benefactor to whom we are ungrateful; an Almighty who is defied; an Indweller who is chased away; a Judge who can punish. It speaks of engagements broken, duties violated, conscience silenced.—*Pusey.*

## VI. THE SUBJECTS MOST NEEDING CONVERSION.

### 1 Those who wilfully live in sin.

[13928] These most certainly need conversion. We need not dwell upon this point, or attempt to prove the statement; for all, who have any religion, believe concerning the murderer, the thief, the drunkard, and other notorious sinners, that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. v. 21). Therefore they must be converted from their sins if they are to be saved.—*Rev. D. F. White, M.A.*

### 2 Those who sin in ignorance.

[13929] This truth is recognized by the Church, when in her Litany she prays God "to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances." But it is not so generally believed in the world that people may be doing *wrong*, when they think they are doing *right*. And yet it is sadly true (and especially among the young) that sinful habits sometimes gain great power before the person guilty of them has ever realized that they are sinful. Conscience is not an infallible guide, unless her voice is quickened by the Spirit of God. Therefore it is good for us to use the prayer, "That which I see not, teach Thou me. If I have done iniquity, I will do no more" (Job xxxiv. 32).—*Ibid.*

### 3 Those who hold a wrong faith.

[13930] There are many religions in the world besides the religion taught by Jesus Christ. And those who hold these religions are often very much in earnest, although they are wrong in their faith. Now, it is not at all uncommon to hear it said of such people: "If they act up to their belief, it does not much matter what doctrines they hold." But surely it is a great mistake to suppose that we can be pleasing our blessed Lord when we accept new doctrines, invented by man, and reject His own teaching,

and that of His apostles! If we do this we have not even the same excuse that Saul of Tarsus had when he "persecuted the church of God and wasted it" (Gal. i. 13). He followed the old traditions; and it was only because he believed Christianity to be a new and false religion that he opposed it as he did. And yet we all feel that although he was sincere in his belief, he was really doing wrong, and therefore needed conversion. His was a conversion from one faith to another. It was not simply a change from a wicked life to a good one. He did not allow pride or prejudice to stand in his way, but he admitted that he had been wrong, and embraced the Christian faith. Just in the same way, if any among ourselves have held a false, or imperfect, faith, it is necessary that they should be converted, and renounce their errors, however much in earnest they may have been.—*Ibid.*

#### 4 Those who have self-assurance.

[13931] St. Peter was a striking instance of one holding the doctrine of "assurance" before his conversion. He was always trusting to himself, and feeling safe in the power of his love for Christ, and his good resolutions. Therefore our Lord found it necessary to make him feel his weakness again and again. It was he who was ready at once to venture on the water to meet his Master. But he was allowed to begin to sink that he might realize his dependence on a strength greater than his own. It was he who declared, "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee"; and yet a few hours later his moral courage failed him, and he *did* deny his Lord. So it is only too likely to be with those who speak and feel so confidently of their love and service of Christ. They are trusting too much to themselves, and too little to the Saviour, forgetting the warning of St. Paul: "Let him that *thinketh he standeth*, take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12). Therefore they need conversion, in order that self-assurance may be taken away, and they may learn to *distrust* self, and trust only in the help of Christ.—*Ibid.*

#### 5 Those who have one great fault.

[13932] This was the case with the disciples when they contended as to which of them should be "greatest in the kingdom of heaven." In other respects they were holy, godly men; but their want of humility spoilt all the rest; and so important was this one point, that our Lord declared that unless converted in that one respect they could not inherit His kingdom. Hence we must remember that true conversion must include a turning from *all* sin, and not only from one or more of our sinful habits.—*Ibid.*

[13933] Many acts of conversion may be needed by some of us believers, just as the twelve needed a conversion from the sin of pride and vainglory. Any remaining sin in the Christian requires a conversion as certainly as

do the sins of what are called pre-eminently, and I fear by some Pharisaically, "unconverted characters." Am I in any way sinful still? Am I doing any wrong to any one? Am I in anything breaking God's commands? Is there any sinful feeling in me to God or man? Is there any habit of sin, secret or seen, yet unbroken? any coldness to Christ's love or neglect of God's mercy? Is there in me any pride of life, lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, unholy desire, lack of love, or presence of selfishness? If there is we need a *conversion* from it. The apostles needed conversion from the sin of pride. Peter needed conversion from self-trust and frowardness of heart, and he found it in the bitter weeping of "the same night in which Jesus was betrayed." A church may need converting from the sin of self-glorying.—G. B. Ryley.

### VII. IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE.

[13934] There is no doubt that this question is a most important one. All Christians believe that the doctrine of conversion is part of the Christian faith, although there are various opinions as to what it is, and to what extent it is necessary. Moreover, Holy Scripture most certainly teaches the importance of the subject; as, for example, in our Lord's own words, addressed to His disciples: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3).—*Rev. D. J. White, M.A.*

[13935] It is certainly true that many have exaggerated the importance of this doctrine. Some Christians make it almost the only article of faith. They speak of "a converted man" as if his conversion were everything, as if he had no special religious duties to perform, no great need of watchfulness, no reason to consider himself any longer a sinner, no dependence on the help of the means of grace. In short, as if he had only to wait until God should call him to heaven as a reward for his goodness in being converted. On the other hand, those who are supposed to be "unconverted" too often hear no other doctrine taught, and have no other means of salvation set before them, beyond the necessity for conversion. This is not warranted by the teaching of Holy Scripture or of the Church.—*Ibid.*

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### REGENERATING.

#### I. THE NECESSITY FOR REGENERATION.

[13936] What a satire on developed goodness in man is expressed in the tone of the Scriptures towards the best embodiment of the natural virtues! Breathe into Nature's good man the most comely of her graces; educate in him the most refined of her sensibilities; develop in him the most magnanimous of her impulses; fashion in him the most docile

obedience to her teachings; nurture in him the most elegant and placid of her tastes, so that to the silken judgment of the world his character shall seem to be a paragon of beauty, "fair as a star when only one is shining in the sky;" yet, if that fascinating being—that young man of whom it shall be said that Jesus, beholding him, loved him—has not been changed by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, the honest eye of God sees him as a naked soul in bondage to the prince of the power of the air.—*A. Phelps, D.D.*

[13937] We infer both from Scripture and experience that regeneration, the work of the Holy Spirit, is made essential by the changes required in the heart, in order that there may be a right disposition toward holiness, instead of a wrong bias toward corruption. For so long as there are unholy motives in the heart actuating, for the most part, the conduct, so long as self is first and God's will second, there is no proof of the new creation; but, on the contrary, evidence that the person so thinking must be born again before he can see the kingdom of God.—*R. Craig, M.A.*

[13938] Why did our Lord preach the new birth to Nicodemus, and not conversion? Had Jesus said to him, Except you be converted, and become as a little child, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, he might have replied, From what and to what do I need to be converted? It is as a little child that I come to Thee for instruction: I know that Thou art a teacher come from God; I humbly crave Thy teaching. And there would have been truth in this. There was much of the childlike spirit in Nicodemus. *That*, therefore, was not the special lesson which he required. What he needed to be taught was that not *knowledge*, but *life* was essential: not the *knowing*, but the *being*: and hence the abrupt decisive utterance, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This unlooked-for answer, so worthy of a "teacher come from God," threw Nicodemus back upon first principles: it told him that learning could not save him: that he must *live*, live spiritually before God, or, so far from sharing in the glory of the Messianic reign, he could not even see the kingdom of God.—*Rev. Sir Emilius Bayley, B.D.*

[13939] We require to be born again. Partial faults may be corrected by other physicians; our worldly interest will often cure idleness and wastefulness; our natural affection and humanity will make us kind to our relations and friends, and dispose us to relieve the distresses of our neighbours; our regard to our bodily health may keep us free from sensual indulgences; our sense of honour may preserve our tongue from falsehood; but this is only removing a local complaint, while the general decay of the constitution is going on as fast as ever. Christ only can make us sound from head to foot, in the body and in the limbs, free from outward sores

and from inward weakness and sickness.—*T. Arnold, D.D.*

## II. ITS INSTRUMENT.

[13940] Regeneration is ascribed in express terms to the instrumentality of the Word, as being that seed by which those who have been born again were begotten of God (James i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 23), but when viewed under particular aspects, the representation is regularly and consistently the same. Is regeneration a slaying of the natural enmity of the heart? then it is the Word which is the sword (Eph. vi. 17; Heb. iv. 12). Is it the quickening of a man into a new life? then it is the Word which vivifies (John vi. 63). Is it the production of a state of holy affection? then it is the Word which cleanses and sanctifies (John xv. 3, xvii. 17). Is it the emancipation of the soul from bondage? then it is the Word which gives it freedom (John viii. 31, 32). In sum, is it an impartation to the soul, morally, of the Divine nature? then the promises of the Word are the vehicle of the communication.—*W. Anderson, LL.D.*

[13941] God employs in regeneration, *Truth as distinct from instruments* of physical power. God is wisely studious of congruities. He adapts the instrument to the effect. He calls to His service, in the renewal of the mind, that which intelligence can conceive, heart feel, will choose; that which, therefore, the whole man can accept, trust, love, and obey. *Truth*, again, is employed *as distinct from falsehood*. A human heart was never changed by the force of error. If a man is saved in his error, he is not saved by it, but by truth, lodged somewhere in it. Pure error tends to destruction as inevitably as fire. An echo comes down the ages of inspiration, "that they all might be damned who believe not the truth."—*A. Phelps, D.D.*

[13942] God employs in regeneration *religious truth as distinct from all other truth*. Not the axioms of mathematics, which appeal only to man's sense of the true; not truths which address only man's sense of the beautiful; not truths which move only man's sense of grandeur; not truths which gratify only man's love of mystery; not truths which quicken only man's sense of honour; not truths which take possession only of man's social affections; not these are the causal instrument of the new birth. Right, holiness, law, love, God—such are the rudimental ideas of truth in this Divine renewal. Primarily and ultimately they appeal to conscience. Through this regal faculty they command the whole soul. Moreover, in the regeneration of those to whom the Christian revelation is given, God employs as His chosen and final instrument, *Truth as it radiates from the person and the work of Christ*: "I am the Truth; I am the Life;" "The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation;" "Nothing save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."—*Ibid.*

[13943] The new birth, as represented in the



Scriptures, gives no support to the theory, so natural to superficial thought, that belief, as such, is of little moment in religion; that God will judge characters, and not creeds; that we shall not be held responsible for obeying another man's faith in preference to our own. On the contrary, in regeneration character and creed are indissolubly united. God's instrument in effecting the change is truth. Falsehood finds no place there. Truth in caricature finds none. The less a man believes of truth, the more distant is he from the probable range of regenerating grace. The more distorted a man's opinions are, the more fearful are his perils. The more negative his convictions become, the more faint becomes all reasonable hope that he will be saved. In terrific consistency with this principle is the scriptural representation of the most hopeless depth of sin, as that of those to whom God sends delusion, that they may believe a lie. God acts in regeneration where truth can act; not elsewhere. The mind that withholds itself from truth is withholding itself from God.—*Ibid.*

[13944] Objectively, regeneration has been already begun in baptism; for by baptism the individual is united to Christ, incorporated into His kingdom, prepared for a new personality: but subjectively, regeneration actively begins when the man enters upon a personal and living relationship to the historical order of God's kingdom, as a member of the body of which Christ is the Head; and thus derives his spiritual life, not only from individual religious impulses and experiences, but out of the fulness of the whole.—*Lip. Martensen.*

### III. ITS MYSTERIOUSNESS.

[13945] The means employed by the Spirit of God to bring about the new birth may not be observed. We can see the bud for the next spring when the leaves fall in autumn; but the processes of development are all latent. The germ of life is protected by thick scales, gummed so as to protect the tender fibres from the cold. When the sunshine warms the air, the buds expand, there is new life in every branch; the green leaves and bright flowers give evidence that the preparatory work of the former summer has not been in vain. But a hasty observer might conclude that the new life was a sudden outburst of beauty from dead wood, from trees which in winter seemed without life, without leaves, without a fringe of green on the dark bark.—*R. Craig, M.A.*

[13946] The greatness of the change is not violence of change. Supernaturalness of cause is not unnaturalness in effect. Deity in the power is not miracle in the result. In material nature are not the most profound phenomena the most simple? The very mystery of their causation enhances by contrast their lucidness as facts. What is the most sublime change the physical world ever under-

goes? Is it an earthquake? Is it not rather the noiseless change from night to day? The mightiest forces in the universe are silent forces. Who ever heard the budding of an oak? Who was ever deafened by the falling of the dew? Who was ever stunned by a solar eclipse? So is it with the august phenomenon of a change of heart. So far as we know, it is the most radical change a human spirit can experience. It is a revolutionary change. Disembodiment by death, morally estimated, is not so profound. Still, a change of heart is not an unnatural change. Truth may act in it with an equipoise of forces as tranquil as that of gravitation in the orbits of the stars.—*A. Phelps, D.D.*

[13947] It is not of necessity a tumultuous experience to which God calls us when He invites us to be saved. By what emblem have the Scriptures expressed the person of the Holy Ghost? Is it an eagle? "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a *dove*." "Come," is the select language of inspiration, "come, and ye shall find"—what? struggle, terror, torture? No; "ye shall find—peace."—*Ibid.*

### IV. ITS REASONABLENESS.

[13948] What phraseology was more familiar with the infidel revolutionists of France than the regeneration of their country? And is the idea of a regenerated individual an extravagant one to be sneered at, when that of a regenerated nation is to be treated with respect? Yea, infidel speculators will discourse of a regenerated world, and yet make sport to themselves with our faith, as if it were fantastic and visionary, when we speak of the regeneration of a single man! How is it that, being such masters in philosophy and politics, they know not these things?—*W. Anderson, LL.D.*

### V. ITS COMPLETENESS.

[13949] "The new man in Christ Jesus" is formed an entire man at once. He is produced, indeed, at first as a child; but still he is a perfect child, with all the properties of a man—none being reserved to be afterwards supplemented, but only developed. The cross of Christ, at the very first glance of the believing eye, flashes light over the entire moral nature, which with electrifying power penetrates and pervades the soul, leaving no affection unrenewed by a portion of sanctifying influences. The regenerate birth is not a mutilated, or deformed, or monstrous one. Of that you may be certain. As in the natural birth, so in the spiritual, among a number born there is a variety of degrees of excellence, where organ is compared with organ, and member with member, and feature with feature; but every one is possessed of all the parts; every one is a perfect child.—*Ibid.*

## VI. ITS INFLUENCE.

[13950] Just as truly as the physical life moulds the infant's limbs, just as truly as every periwinkle shell on the beach is shaped into the convolutions that will fit the inhabitant, by the power of the life that lies within, so the renewed mind will make a fit dwelling for itself.—*Alex. Maclaren, D.D.*

[13951] To a large extent a man's spirit shapes his body, within the limits of course, but to a very large and real extent. Did you never see some homely face, perhaps of a grey-haired, wrinkled old woman, perhaps of some pallid invalid, that had in it the very radiance of heaven, and of which it might be said without exaggeration that it "was as the face of an angel"? Did you ever see goodness making men and women beautiful? Did you ever see some noble emotion stamp its own nobility on the countenance, and seem to dilate a man's very form and figure, and make the weakest like an angel of God? Have there not been other faces besides the face of Moses, that shone as he came down from the Mount of Communion with God? Or, as Milton puts it—

" Oft converse with heavenly habitants,  
Begins to cast a beam on the outward shape,  
The unpolluted temple of the mind."

Even as the fashion of his countenance was altered, so the inner life of Christ, deep and true in a man's heart, will write its presence in his countenance, and show how awful and how blessed goodness is.—*Ibid.*

[13952] This ought to be the case of all that profess the Christian faith, that they be new creatures; not only that they have a new name, and wear a new livery, but that they have a new heart and a new nature. And so great is the change that the grace of God makes in the soul, that, as it followeth, old things are passed away, old thoughts, old principles, and old practices are passed away; and all these things must become new. Regenerating grace creates a new world in the soul—old things are new.—*Matthew Henry.*

[13953] The renewed man acteth from new principles, by new rules, with new ends, and in new company.—*Ibid.*

## VII. SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF REGENERATION.

[13954] It is called a *renovation* of the soul, or its being made new; a *transformation* of the soul, or its being changed into another likeness; a *translating* of the soul, or its being brought from one position and placed in another, and a very different one; a *quickenings* of the soul, or its receiving a new life; a *resurrection* of the soul, or its being raised from the dead; a *new creation* of the soul, or its being created anew by Him who made it; the *washing* of the soul,

or its purification from defilement; the *healing* of the soul, or its being delivered from disease; the *liberation* of the soul, or its being emancipated from bondage; the *awakening* of the soul, or its being aroused out of sleep; and it is compared to the change which is wrought on the blind, when they receive their sight; on the deaf, when their hearing is restored; on the lepers, when they are cleansed; on the dead, when they are raised to life.—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

## VIII. THE DOCTRINE AS TREATED BY INSPIRATION.

[13955] Inspiration does not pet the doctrine, nor prop the doctrine, nor seem to tremble for the honour of the doctrine. It treats the doctrine more regally. By collateral mention of it, by calm assumption of it, by cool implications of it, by unpremeditated allusions to it, and by delicate hints of it, the inspired mind treats it as if it were a truth of which an intimation is equivalent to a demonstration; a truth which, once insinuated into the mind through crevices of thought, will be like light to the universe. It will assert itself. It will prove itself. It will vindicate its own dignity, and flood all things else with its superabounding radiance. Such is the temper of the faith in this doctrine which the inspired writers would create in a believing soul.—*A. Phelps, D.D.*

## IX. THE LAW OF THE REGENERATE LIFE.

[13956] There is a close analogy between the condition of Adam before the Fall and the state of man regenerated. He might freely eat of all the trees in Paradise, one only excepted. To the Christian every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, on one condition only: it must be received with thanksgiving; and this implies that he shall not use his liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servant of God. He is so to use the world as not to abuse it. Enjoyment, though not forbidden, is restrained, and that under a stronger obligation, because of the corruption of the flesh.—*Alex. Short, M.A.*

(8)

## SANCTIFYING.

## I. DEFINITION AND NATURE OF SANCTIFICATION.

Sanctification implies man's participation, as far as may be, in the holiness of the Divine nature.

[13957] Sanctification is the process by which human nature is set free from its *unhallowed* character.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[13958] Sanctification is that healing process by which a sinner is to be converted into a saint, gradually parting with all his corrupt and cor-

rupting tendencies, and advancing towards the attainment of those heavenly virtues whereby he may grow into a nearer and nearer conformity to the will and likeness of the holy author of his being. In short, this is the process which St. Peter most exactly describes when, speaking of the exceeding great and precious promises, which are given unto us in the gospel, he says, that the end of all the promises is this, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.—*E. G. Marsh, M.A.*

[13959] To be heartily devoted to God as His own is the form of sanctification, and to live as God's own is the truly holy life.—*R. Baxter.*

[13960] Sanctification includes the mortification of sin, and the cultivation of practical holiness; the mortification of sin, in thought, in desire, in word, in action; and the cultivation of holiness, in the same way, in thought, in desire and affection, in word, in action; crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts; and by the diligent and persevering use of all prescribed means of spiritual improvement, namely, the word, the ordinances, and the providential dispensations of God, cherishing all the principles of the Divine life in the soul.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

[13961] Complete sanctification is sought for by the Apostle Paul when he "prays God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 23). And this prayer is answered when the spirit holds all appetites of the body and all the interested schemes of the soul subject to its own approval.—*L. P. Hitchcock, D.D.*

[13962] All holiness is contained in two points: knowledge of God, and knowledge of self. Knowledge of God elevates the soul; knowledge of self humbles it. The former lifts it to the abyss of Divine perfections; the latter sinks it to its own abyss of nothingness and sin. Marvellous ladder of sanctity, whereon men descend while they ascend, and in the same proportion! For the true elevation of man is inseparable from his true humiliation.—*Père Gron.*

[13963] Holiness is religion shining. It is the candle lighted, and not hid under a bushel, but lighting the house. It is religious principle put into motion. It is the love of God sent forth into circulation, on the feet and with the hands of love to man. It is faith gone to work. It is charity coined into actions, and devotion breathing benedictions on human suffering, while it goes up in intercessions to the Father of all piety.—*Right Rev. F. D. Huntington, D.D.*

## II. ITS NECESSITY.

God has no ultimate use for a man who is not holy.

[13964] A rose-tree that does not blossom is

of no use in a garden. A vine that bears no grapes is of no use in a vineyard.—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

[13965] In Heb. xii. 14 it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit to convey a chief truth of religion in a few words. It is this circumstance which makes it especially impressive; for the truth itself is declared in one form or other in every part of Scripture. It is told us again and again, that to make sinful creatures holy was the great end which our Lord had in view in taking upon Him our nature, and thus none but the holy will be accepted for His sake at the last day. The whole history of redemption, the covenant of mercy in all its parts and provisions, attests the necessity of holiness in order to salvation; as indeed even our natural conscience bears witness also.—*Cardinal Newman.*

[13966] Holiness is frequently misunderstood, and frequently misrepresented. It is often regarded as a very beautiful, ethereal, heavenly spirit, admirably adapted for dwelling in celestial abodes, but wholly unfitted for contact with the roughness of daily toil, or for battle in the marts of men. It is supposed to be a most fitting state of mind for the retired devotee, or the lonely student; to be an admirable companion for the dreamy mystic, or the grey-haired sage; but to be most unsuited for the artisan in his workshop, the merchant in his counting-house, or the statesman in his Parliament. Men, indeed, who call themselves Christians, admit the abstract excellence of a something they understand as "holiness," but defer the mature consideration of it to the more convenient season, when the cares of the world shall not be so engrossing, or when sickness may relax their grasp upon the things of time. But who can predict with certainty that they shall ever call this "convenient season" theirs? Even if, however, we could know assuredly that a time would be given us for preparation before being called hence, this would not alter the fact that holiness, if good at all, and right at all, is good and right for all our years, and not for the fag-end of life alone. He, therefore, who defers the effort after holiness is ignoring the scriptural injunction, which is to be holy *now* in our everyday life, in *all* manner of conversation; and is also practically robbing himself of time, character, worth, and glory. Holiness being the fundamentally right state of our lives in all their varieties, modes, and thoughts, it follows that this state must be one, not fitted for a few men only, but for all men, in all they ought to do.—*J. McCann, D.D.*

## III. ITS MEANS.

A living faith in Christ and an attentive contemplation of His example and character.

[13967] Holiness, we are told, is to be obtained by faith. Yes, I reply, by faith, if you take that word in all its meaning. Not the faith which



by one act appropriates the blessing, and receives in an hour, in an instant, all the fulness of the heritage ; but the faith which accepts and applies the work and the word of Christ day by day, year after year, through all the life.—*W. Clarkson, B.A.*

[13968] By faith, a living faith, a lasting faith, a faith which through years of service and of struggle, of love and of joy, appropriates the promises and applies the truths of God to the aspiring and endeavouring human soul, are we made holy.—*Ibid.*

[13969] The only evidence a man can give that he has a *living* and not a mere *dead* faith, is a holy life ; for faith “worketh by love and purifieth the heart.” An old writer remarks, “Say not that thou hast royal blood in thy veins, and art born of God, except thou canst prove thy pedigree by daring to be holy.”—*Rev. R. Boyd, D.D.*

[13970] Nowhere doth it more clearly appear what a vile, filthy thing sin is, than in the lowness, emptyings, and sufferings of Christ. What clothed the Lord of glory with the contemptible form of a servant ? What pressed the magnanimous Lion of the tribe of Judah with such great horrors and griefs, as that under them He well-nigh fainted ? What stirred up the cruel forces of hell against Him ? What turned the affluence of Divine consolations into most doleful drought ? What mingled those most bitter bitternesses in the cup of Divine wrath with which the beloved Son of God was well-nigh exanimated ? Certainly sin was the cause of all these (Isa. liii. 5). Will not he who thinks of this burn with irreconcilable hatred thereof ? Will he not endeavour to take revenge on such an outrageous monster, which so cruelly afflicted his dearest Lord ; and which, unless it had been first slain, would have raged with the same cruelty against all those by whom it is so kindly received ? Will any, who seriously considers and believes this, ever bring his mind to give up himself again a slave to that tyrant, from whose chains, glowing with the fire of hell, he could never have been delivered but by the cursed death of the Son of God ? Thus the meditation of the sufferings of Christ maketh us, that, being dead to sin, we should live unto righteousness.—*Hermann Witsius.*

[13971] The student in art is sent to refine his taste and exalt his genius by the patient investigation of the great masters of antiquity ; the student in holiness is referred to Him who is the exemplar of all that is good, the original of all that is fair ; and no sooner does he begin to admire, than he begins to partake ; he is “changed into the same image from glory to glory.” Possessed with the idea of God, he is enamoured of all he meets with that is beautiful and good ; but, instead of resting in any fragmentitious excellence, it only sends him in thought to the great Archetype, with whom, by

an instinctive act of the mind, he compares it, and so estimates its worth.—*J. Harris, D.D.*

[13972] It is not conceivable that He who is the Fountain of all love and the Standard of all justice would command His creatures to do what they have not the power to perform. The character of Christ has brought God's holiness, from the region of abstraction and the infinite heavens, within, so to say, an easy reach of us. Even infidels have been bound to acknowledge the Divine holiness of Christ. Whatever else may be taken from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left : a unique figure, not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers : a Divine Person, a Standard of excellence, and a Model for imitation, available even to the absolute unbeliever, and can never be lost to humanity.—*Anon.*

[13973] The way to reach Divine holiness is to follow Christ. No character ever appeared in history so imitable as His. He is the most imitable character.—First : Who has the most power to command admiration—the admiration of the soul. Secondly : Who is the most transparent in character. Thirdly : Who is the most unalterable in purpose. Therefore follow Him.—*Ibid.*

#### IV. ITS STANDARD AND MODEL.

The holiness which the ethics of the gospel inculcate, acknowledges no standard but God.

[13974] If man's character is to be a copy, how important that the model should be of the best description ! But where was such a model to be found ? where, among all the specimens of virtue which earth has owned, and even all the ideal forms of worth the imagination had portrayed ? Man had lost even the *idea* of moral perfection. Such excellence can be understood only by sympathy ; but for this sin had disqualified him ; and hence the necessity of his regeneration into the Divine image before he can understand what that image is. To have selected the best, the least imperfect, of human characters for imitation, would have been therefore to erect a defective standard ; and of this, the part which, most likely, would have been first copied into his nature, would have been its faults and imperfections. Besides, the period might have come when he had succeeded in equalling his model ; the resemblance is complete ; but he feels himself capable of higher attainments still ; where now is the pattern for him to copy ? He wants one whose excellence knows no limits, but which shall continue to enlarge as he approaches it, and to unfold new beauties as he becomes capable of appreciating and imitating them, in endless progression ; in fine, the only example suitable to our nature is a perfect example. The blessed Saviour supplies this necessity : “Be ye perfect,” said He, “even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”—*J. Harris, D.D.*

13975-13984]

[OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST, INDIVIDUALLY CONSIDERED.]

## V. ITS MOTIVE.

[13975] Because the final day is coming, keep the body, soul, and spirit pure. Sanctify the body, that it may shine out a glorified body in that day : sanctify the soul, that its pure powers may be able to receive the truth and light of that day : sanctify the spirit, that it may be able to commune with the eternal love when Christ comes. That will be a day when Christ shall gather from all worlds and ages the hosts of His redeemed. Therefore, let no selfishness, no suspicion, no harsh judgments, no cold, cruel condemnation of your brethren divide you now. Sanctify body, soul, and spirit, that you may be meetened for the "church of the first-born." Our days are going. The years are darkening round us. The purple bars of morning broaden, even now, upon the horizon. The day of Christ is rising. Therefore, pray daily, *live* daily, this prayer—"The very God of peace sanctify us wholly, that our whole body, soul, and spirit be presented blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."—*E. L. Hull, B.A.*

## VI. ITS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

Sanctification is capable of infinite growth, and is developed through a connected series of Christian virtues.

[13976] This devotion to God is in a sense imperfect. At the end of every day we acknowledge that we have failed to work out fully into all the details of the day the one purpose which has by the grace of God been the mainspring of our action ; and that we have often chosen unsuitable means. But each day we learn better what will, and what will not, advance the purposes of God, and each day our one great purpose permeates more fully our entire thoughts, and more fully directs our entire activity. Moreover, each day brings to us fresh proofs of the faithfulness, power, and love of God, and thus increases the strength of the faith with which we lay hold of all the benefits promised in His Word. This daily submission to the guidance of the Spirit brings us more completely under His holy influence, and, since our entire Christian life takes the form of devotion to God, all spiritual progress may be spoken of as growth in holiness.—*J. A. Beet.*

[13977] Sanctification is a *process* ; and, like that change of one political government for another, that setting up of a new kingdom in the heart, to which it is compared, it encounters many an obstacle, and asks time for adjustment and consolidation.—*J. Harris, D.D.*

[13978] Perfection comes by leisure, and no excellent thing is done at once. The gourd, which came up in a night, withered in a day ; but the plants that live long rise slowly. It is the rising and setting of many suns that ripens the business both of nature and art.—*T. Adams.*

[13979] In what way can man better employ

himself than in purifying and cultivating his peculiar nature by his spiritual powers ? He requires restraint only when he has given loose to his passions through some corruption of his nature. Otherwise the working of God's grace in man is a silent and noiseless operation, and the more successful it is the more natural it appears, and is so in reality. Virtue is only a conflict by which we get the mastery of our failings ; that by which every man proves his peculiar power of understanding the will and spirit of God is only a silent working of the inner man.—*Schliermacher.*

[13980] The human soul, if holiness is to abide in it, ought to grow up, like the temple of Jerusalem, in silence. The stones of which it is constructed, the materials employed to edify it, should be "made ready before they are brought thither."—*Guesses at Truth.*

[13981] The progress of holiness is sometimes like the lengthening of daylight, after the days are past the shortest. The difference is for some time imperceptible, but still is real ; and in due season becomes undeniably visible.—*Salter.*

[13982] It is often difficult to gauge our advance in holiness. To do so we must employ a measure of sufficient capacity. If we confine our attention to a few days or weeks, it is likely we shall be disappointed, being unable to perceive any advance. We must rather take in months and years. You shall stand by the seashore and be unable at first to discover whether the tide ebbs or flows. It is only after diligent watching for an appreciable period that you decide that the sea is slowly but certainly advancing.—*M. J.*

[13983] As the external man perishes, so the inward is renewed day by day. As in the process of petrification, for every particle of wood washed away by the dropping well, another particle of stone is deposited in its place ; so our sanctification goes on by a minute molecular change of the heart from stone to flesh, a process of depetrification, as it might be called. Little by little the flesh gives way to the spirit, and more and more the spirit becomes accustomed to claim and enforce obedience.—*J. B. Heard, M.A.*

[13984] As the needle of a compass, when it is directed to its beloved star, at the first addresses waves on either side, and seems indifferent in his courtship of the rising or declining sun ; and when it seems first determined to the north, stands awhile trembling, as if it suffered inconvenience in the first fruition of its desires, and stands not still in full enjoyment till after first a great variety of motion, and then an undisturbed posture ; so is the piety and so is the conversion of a man, wrought by degrees and several steps of imperfection : and at first our choices are wavering ; convinced by the grace of God, and yet not per-

suaed; and then persuaded, but not resolved; and then resolved, but deferring to begin; and then beginning, but, as all beginnings are, in weakness and uncertainty; and we fly out often into huge indiscretions, and look back to Sodom, and long to return to Egypt: and when the storm is quite over, we find little bubbleings and unevenness on the face of the waters; we often weaken our own purposes by the returns of sin; and we do not call ourselves conquerors, till by the long possession of virtues it is a strange and unusual, and therefore an uneasy and unpleasant, thing to act a crime.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

[13985] Progress is shown in the increasing dominion of the spirit over the flesh, in that it becomes easier to us to overcome ourselves, also to gain the victory over besetting sins, even over the special weaknesses belonging to our peculiar disposition. And not only is it shown in mortifying the flesh, but also in a more powerful unfolding of the spirit, a greater fruitfulness, as well in the exercise of the duties of our proper calling, as in the fulfilment of all the duties of truth, righteousness, and love, to which we are bound in daily intercourse with men.—*Ep. Martensen.*

[13986] Progress not only makes itself felt in the practical direction, but also in the contemplative and mystical. It is a mark of progress that we do not in our Christian knowledge remain standing at the first elements, but “go on unto perfection,” that is, raise ourselves and make progress (Heb. vi. 1), so that “we may comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge” (Eph. iii. 18 f.), so that we are in a position to “try the spirits, whether they are of God” (1 John iv. 1), and no longer allow ourselves, what so easily happens to unestablished minds, “to be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine,” but amid the struggles of the present time also, stand firm and unmovable, faithful to the truth, and upright in love (Eph. iv. 14 f.)—*Ibid.*

[13987] Progress is recognizable in this, that we learn ever better to strive and continue in prayer. Prayer is in any case the fundamental condition of all progress.—*Ibid.*

[13988] And may it not be—must it not be—that this constant progress and constant approach to the mark shall go on after death, as well as during his life on earth? In a very blessed sense, indeed, the soul of the believer shall at his death be made perfect in holiness, for then he shall be freed at once from temptation, from the last traces of indwelling sin, and from all the incumbrances and impediments which so interfered with the active service of God. But God’s holiness shall yet shine as a bright asymptotic line of light far above him, and while during centuries and millenniums he mingles with the seraphim about the throne, he

will still with them behold, and still with them adore, and, beholding and adoring, will still with them approach; yet will his nearer approach only enhance his wonder and his adoration, and in even deeper and more reverential tones he will join in the anthem which they, with unveiled faces, shall still be singing, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts.—*T. Smith, D.D.*

## VII. ITS RANGE AND EXTENT.

Sanctification must embrace the whole man—body, soul, and spirit,—mind, intellect, and will.

[13989] In 1 Thess. v. 23 the apostle desires that the very God of peace may sanctify them wholly (*ὁλοτελής*). The word *ὁλοτελής*, which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, is clearly contrasted with the following *ὀλοκληρον*, and the contrast is that between *totus* and *integer*, complete and entire. In the one case the apostle prays that their salvation may be *complete* as a whole (*totus*), in the other *entire* (*integer*) in every part. The complete sanctification of the believer thus suggests those parts of man’s nature that the Divine Spirit is to enter and entirely (*entièrement*, i.e., inwardly) sanctify by His indwelling power. If sanctification is to be complete as to the *end*, so it must be as to the *means*; if of the *whole*, so of the *parts*. The *τελος*, in the first compound, suggests the end, which is our whole sanctification; the *κληρος*, of the second, suggests the means, that we may be sanctified in every part. Sanctification thus rests on these two conditions, that the Holy Spirit shall possess each of the three parts of our nature, and possess them entirely. If sanctification, as the work of God the Holy Ghost, is to reach its proper *τελος*, or end, He must first enter in and occupy each several part of man’s nature, and then sanctify that several part thoroughly.—*J. B. Heard, M.A.*

[13990] The order in which the apostle mentions *spirit*, *soul*, and *body*, in 1 Thess. v. 23, seems to point to the work of sanctification being *progressive*, as well as an entire work. The Divine Spirit enters and dwells in our spirits first. From thence He gets the mastery over the desires of the mind, and lastly over the desires of the flesh. We have reached the state of *entire* sanctification, the perfection (though never sinless) which is attainable on this side of the grave, when, with the apostle, we keep our body under and bring it into subjection, deal it blows in the face, as the conquering gladiator did, and grapple it with a hook to drag it off dead from the arena (1 Cor. ix. 27).—*Ibid.*

[13991] In one of the many mansions of the house of the Great Father, intellect has its own reward, if sanctified. He who “hath made all things for Himself” must have prepared for those wonderful, transcending intellects, whose piercing thoughts are more like intuition than reflection, some separate lustre in that bright



galaxy around His throne. But only if tried, perfected, sanctified. All of man, passions, will, affections, imagination, intellect, have to be tempered, purified, perfected, through the fire of trial without, within by the fire of the Spirit. Intellect, penetrated by the Spirit of God, irradiated by His light, kindled by the glow of Divine love, reflects to after ages the light which it has caught, illumines mysteries, guards truth, unfolds our spiritual nature, orders the whole sum and relations and proportions of Divine and human knowledge. But intellect, unenlightened by Divine light, intuitive as it may be in human things, is blind in Divine. It is not merely, as the acute mathematician may not understand moral or physical science. The knowledge which pure intellect lacks is not outward but inward; not natural but supernatural. Man may understand the things of man; God only unfolds the things of God; through God only can we understand the things of God.—*Pusey*.

[13992] Why does Paul lay such emphasis on the consecration of all our powers? Because the three ranges of powers become gateways of temptation from three different worlds, and unless they are all consecrated, we are never free from danger. Thus, men have tried to purify their outward life alone, leaving the soul unguarded, and the spirit unsundered, and then the secret sins of pride and imagination break out, at last, into open acts, and wreck their outward purity. Men have left the spirit unconsecrated, guarding carefully the body and soul: Peter tried that. He had subdued the bodily fear of death; he had nerved his soul to meet scorn and shame, and declared himself ready, for Christ, to die; but relying on his own spiritual strength, he had left the spirit unsundered, and before the first temptation he fell. Men have tried to hallow the spirit only. They have endeavoured to keep their higher life apart, and separate it as too sacred to pervade their daily work; and the result has been seen in those dishonesties and commercial frauds that have so often blemished the men who profess a special and peculiar saintliness. In short, we must be consecrated through the whole range of our powers, or we shall not be consecrated at all. We are surrounded by the enemy, and if one portal be left unguarded, the foe will enter to pervade and possess the city of the soul. Therefore, with a most profound glance into man's nature, Paul prayed that "their whole body and soul and spirit might be sanctified wholly."—*E. L. Hull, B.A.*

#### VIII. ITS DISTINCTION FROM MERE MORALITY.

Holiness differs in kind from morality; nor will the presence of the latter in any way compensate for the absence of the former.

[13993] A man may perform moral acts from fear of punishment, or desire after a good reputation among men. Such a man is neither

moral nor holy. Another man does what is moral because it has become habitual to him to do so after long practice; another, because he sees that it is in accordance with the law of his nature so to act; another, because it is right and honourable so to conduct himself; another, because it would be unreasonable to do otherwise. These men act morally, but they have not therefore come near to holiness. Holiness, indeed, implies morality, but morality does not imply holiness. Morality is only, as it were, the outer field within which holiness moves. The fault and corruption of our nature is too deeply planted within us, too utterly entwined about the fibres of our hearts, for us to dream of conquering it by the habituation of the philosopher, or by any other means originating with ourselves. So far as it is to be overcome at all, it must be done by a power not our own—an external power taking possession of, and dwelling in, our souls; not evoked from within, but coming down from above to us. Holiness must be imparted to us by the Holy Spirit, who is from above.—*F. Meyrick, M.A.*

#### IX. ITS EVIDENCE.

[13994] There is evidence of sanctification:

1. When holiness is as a new nature in us, and giveth us a promptitude to holy actions, and maketh us free and ready to them, and maketh them easy and familiar to us; whereas the weak go heavily, and can scarce drive on and force their minds.
2. When there is a constancy or frequency of holy actions; which sheweth the strength and stability of holy inclinations.
3. When they are powerful to bear down oppositions and temptations, and can get over the greatest impediments in the way, and make an advantage of all resistance, and despise the most splendid baits of sin.
4. When it is still getting ground, and drawing the soul upward and nearer to God, its rest and end: and when the heart groweth more heavenly and Divine, and stranger to earth and earthly things.
5. When holy and heavenly things are more sweet and delectable to the soul, and are sought and used with more love and pleasure.—*R. Baxter*.

[13995] Look upon a holy man in his calling, and you shall find him holy: look upon him in the use of the creatures, and you shall find him holy: look upon him in his recreations, and you shall find him holy. The habitual frame and bent of his heart is to be holy in every earthly thing that he puts his hand unto.—*T. Brooks*.

[13996] A holy life is made up of a number of small things. Little words, not eloquent speeches or sermons; little deeds, not miracles, nor battles, nor one great heroic act or mighty martyrdom make up the true Christian life. The little constant unbeam, not the lightning, the waters of Siloam "that go softly" in the meek mission of refreshment, not the "waters of the river great and many," rushing down in torrents,

noise, and force, are the true symbols of a holy life. The avoidance of little evils, little sins, little inconsistencies, little weaknesses, little follies, indiscretions, and imprudences, little foibles, little indulgences of self and of the flesh ; the avoidance of such little things as these goes far to make up, at least, the negative beauty of a holy life.—*Bonar.*

[13997] What is the one decisive sign by which we may know whether we have received the Holy Ghost? Is it to be a mere sentiment, an impression upon the mind, a religious hope ; or is it to be something more decisive, emphatic, and incontrovertible? Let me approach that question through two others. Have you received the poetic spirit? How do you prove it? Not by prose, but by poetry. Have you received the heroic spirit? How do you prove it? Not by cowardice, not by craven-heartedness, but by adventure—by freely encountering peril in all its thousand forms and possibilities of visitation. Have you received the Holy Spirit?—*J. Parker, D.D.*

[13998] The decisive sign is love of holiness—not power of theological debate, not only contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, not only outwardly irreproachable character, but love of holiness—not reputation, but reality ; a heart that pants after the holiness of God—life concentrated into one burning prayer to be sanctified, body, soul, and spirit—life a sacrifice on God's altar—that is what I mean by saying that holiness is the one decisive test of our having received the Holy Ghost.—*Ibid.*

#### X. ITS BLESSEDNESS.

[13999] The holy soul is the love of God, the joy of angels ; her eyes dare look upon the glorious Judge whom she knows to be her Saviour. Her heart is courageous ; she dares stand the thunder ; and when guilty minds creep into corners, she is confident in Him that He will defend her. She challengeth the whole world to accuse her of injustice, and fears not the subordination of false witnesses, because she knows the testimony of her own conscience. Her language is free and bold, without the guiltiness of broken stops. Her forehead is clear and smooth, as the brow of Heaven. Her knees are ever bent to the throne of grace ; her feet travelling toward Jerusalem ; her hands weaving the web of righteousness. Good men bless her ; good angels guard her ; the Son of God doth kiss her ; and when all the world shall be turned into a burning pile, she shall be brought safe to the mountain of joy, and set in a throne of blessedness for ever.—*T. Adams.*

[14000] The highest honour which the Romans bestowed upon their greatest captains was to grant them a day of triumph, and in that, permission to wear a crown of grass or leaves, which withered the day following ; but the triumph of

the just shall be eternal, and their never-fading crown is God Himself. Oh, most happy diadem ! Oh, most precious garland of the saints, which is of as great worth and value as is God Himself! —*Ep. Jeremy Taylor.*

[14001] Saporesh, king of the Persians, was most ambitious of honour, and would therefore be called “the brother of the sun and moon, and friend to the planets.” This vain prince erected a most glorious throne, which he placed on high, and thereon sat in great majesty, having under his feet a globe of glass, whereon were artificially represented the motions of the sun, the moon, and stars, and to sit crowned above this fantastical heaven he esteemed as a great honour. What shall be, then, the honour of the just, who shall truly and really sit above the sun, the moon, and the firmament, crowned by the hand of God Himself, and that with a crown of gold, graven with the seal of holiness and the glory of honour? And this honour arrives at that height, that Christ Himself tells us, “He who shall overcome, I will give him to sit with Me in My throne ; even as I have overcome and have sat with the Father in His throne.”—*Ibid.*

#### XI. ITS IDENTIFICATION WITH HAPPINESS—PRESENT AND TO COME.

[14002] It is obvious to suppose an inexpressible pleasure in the very feeling, the inward sensation, the holy soul will have of that happy frame in general, whereinto it is now brought ; that joyful harmony, that entire rectitude it finds within itself. You may as soon separate light from a sunbeam as pleasure from such a state.—*J. Howe.*

[14003] Happiness is the coincidence of the finite will with the infinite ; in other words, it is holiness. And who would wish to be happy at the price of that?—who, what rational or enlightened being, would desire to be happy at the expense of the Divine character and government—at the sacrifice of seeing the creature erected above the Creator? But though all the universe should desire the enormity, it could not be ; for happiness, we repeat, is nothing more, and nothing less, than the coincidence of the finite will with the infinite.—*J. Harris, D.D.*

[14004] Until he works, each individual human spirit is striving to be a centre of influence to itself ; but harmonious subordination to the Supreme Spirit is happiness—is heaven ; and hence the absolute necessity of coming under His subjecting and transforming power, in order to the enjoyment of heaven.—*Ibid.*

[14005] Where the soul hath the seed of holiness, it shall reap a harvest of happiness.—*G. Swinnock, M.A.*

[See Vol. I., Section II., “NAMES AND TITLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.”]

## PART IV.

## RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(Continued).

## DIVISION F.

*THE MEANS OF GRACE.*

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# RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(Continued).

## DIVISION F.

### THE MEANS OF GRACE.

#### 1

#### THE CHURCH, GENERALLY CONSIDERED.

##### I. ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD CHURCH.

[14006] A similarity of sound between the word "Church," as it appears in the Teutonic languages, and the word *κνριακόν*, which was occasionally used instead of *ἐκκλησία* by ecclesiastical writers, led to the opinion that the one word had been derived from the other. It has also been supposed to have been derived from *κῆριον οἶκος*. But the first term is rare even in Greek writers, and there are strong arguments against the probability of its introduction into other languages; while the second, though often found in the accusative case, *τὸν οἶκον κυρίου*, in the LXX., does not appear to have been transferred to Christian writers. In the most primitive known languages of Britain, the corresponding word is plainly allied with *ἐκκλησία*, the Welsh being *Eglwys*, the Cornish *Eglos*, and the Gaelic *Eglais*. Of a similar derivation is the French *Eglise*. Although, therefore, the ecclesiastical words "bishop," "priest," "deacon," are undoubtedly from the Greek, it is not clear that Church is so derived. A more probable derivation is from the Anglo-Saxon "cīrc," a name applied to the stone circles used for Druidical temples, and exactly corresponding to the "kirk" of old English.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology*.

##### II. USAGE OF THE WORD.

- I To denote the primary idea, according to the New Testament, of a separated community composed of Christ's followers, and, as such, dissociated from the rest of the world.

[14007] The Christian Church is a commonwealth, a society of men who meet together for common objects, differing from the minor clubs or unions under which men avail themselves of the principle of association, and resembling those greater societies which we call states, in that it claims unlimited self-sacrifice on the part of its members, and demands that the interest

and safety of the whole shall be set by each member above his own interest, and above all private interests whatever.—*Ecce Homo*.

[14008] Every true church is a contract, not between two parties only, but three. It is not only an agreement of men with men, but of men with God. In disbanding a church, men alone cannot annul the contract.—*Joseph Cook*.

[14009] It would be as unreasonable to call the inhabitants of a country an army, because they heard the call to arms, as to call all who hear but do not obey the gospel, the Church. The army consists of those who actually enrol themselves as soldiers; and the Church consists of those who actually repent and believe, in obedience to the call of the gospel.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

[14010] The Church of God is that living body of men who are called by Him out of the world, not to be the inventors of a new social system; but to exhibit in the world, by word and life—chiefly by life—what humanity is, was, and will be in the idea of God.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson*.

[14011] The Church, in its real, interior being, is the aggregate of all the branches of the True Vine; all the real branches; all that are united to the Vine by an internal, vital bond, in partaking of its life; not of such branches in connection with those which, however professedly and reputedly branches, are only so in appearance by an outward insertion and the tie of a visible bond (that is, the visible Church as seen of men), but of such branches only as commune in the Vine's own life, and by that oneness of spiritual life are united, not only to the Vine, but among themselves also; all abiding in Christ by the fellowship of the Spirit, and He thus abiding in each of them. *That is the Church of Christ*. Union to that Church and union to Christ are therefore identical.—*Bp. McIlvaine*.

[14012] The Church is the fulness of Him who is the fulness of God.—*Dr. Pulsford*.

[14013] The true Church, as existing on earth, is always visible?—

1. As it consists of men and women, in dis-

inction from disembodied spirits or angels. Its members are not impalpable and unseen, as those ministering spirits who, unrevealed to our senses, continually minister to the heirs of salvation. "Surely," exclaims Bellarmine, "the Church does not consist of ghosts!"

2. The Church is visible, because its members manifest their faith by their works. The fact that they are the members of Christ's body becomes notorious. Goodness is an inward quality, and yet it is outwardly manifested, so that the good are known and recognized as such, with sufficient clearness to determine all questions of duty respecting them, believers being known as a tree is known by its fruit.

3. The Church is visible, because believers are, by their "effectual calling," separated from the world. In it they are visible, as a pure river is often seen flowing unmingled through the turbid waters of a broader stream. When the Holy Spirit enters into the heart, renewing it after the image of God, uniting the soul to Christ as a living member of His body, the man becomes a new creature. All men take knowledge of him. They see that he is a Christian. The Church is a city set on a hill. She is the light of the world. She is conspicuous in the beauty of holiness.

4. The true Church is visible in the external church, just as the soul is visible in the body. That is, as by means of the body we know that the soul is there, so by means of the external church we know where the true Church is. The external church, as embracing all who profess the true religion—with their various organizations, their confessions of the truth, their temples, and their Christian worship—make it apparent that the true Church, the body of Christ, exists, and where it is. These are not the Church any more than the body is the soul; but they are its manifestations and its residence.—*C. Hodge, D.D. (condensed).*

2 To denote, in its largest sense, all who have been baptized in the name of Christ, and who thereby make a visible profession of faith in His Divine mission, and in all the doctrines taught by Him and His inspired apostles.

[14014] The visible Church is the whole body of Christians at any time living in this world; that is to say, the whole body of those who have been baptized. . . . But as theologians contemplate only the holy dead when they speak of the invisible Church, so they ordinarily speak of the visible Church in a restricted sense, which does not include heretical, schismatical, or iniquitous Christians; meaning by that term the "One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church" of the Nicene Creed. This is called "*cœtus fidelium*." Of such a *cœtus fidelium* the principal notes or marks by which it is to be distinguished are unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[14015] We say there is a visible and an invisible Church, not meaning to make two dis-

tinct Churches, as our adversaries falsely and maliciously charge us, though the form of words may serve to insinuate some such thing, but to distinguish the divers considerations of the same Church; which, though it be visible in respect of the profession of supernatural verities revealed in Christ, use of holy sacraments, order of ministry, and due obedience yielded thereunto, and they discernible that do communicate therein; yet, in respect of those most precious effects and happy benefits of saving grace, wherein only the elect do communicate, it is invisible; and they that in so happy, gracious, and desirable things have communion among themselves, are not discernible from others to whom this fellowship is denied, but are known only to God.—*Hooker.*

[14016] The Church is invisible in so far as it is the fellowship of the saints, *i.e.*, not merely of *known* but of true believers, scattered among all nations, in all ages, in all conditions and positions; who, however separated by time and space, nevertheless constitute one spiritual mystical body. The Church is invisible in so far as it is a kingdom of invisible powers and gracious activities which constitute its organism, and bring it to the fullness of Christ, who filleth all in all. The Church is invisible in so far as Christ its Head is invisible. But the Church is *visible* in so far as its invisible essence witnesses for itself, and makes itself recognizable to the world—in so far as its existence is conditioned by the historical revelations of Christ—in so far as the workings of grace are conditioned by the *means of grace* appointed by Christ—by the Word and sacraments—and through these she appears in power. As, therefore, on the one hand, it holds good of the true Church that we cannot say of her, "Lo here! or lo there!" it is, on the other hand, equally true concerning her, that she is "the city set on an hill which cannot be hid." Both these truths are expressed in the Augsburg Confession, where the Church is described as a fellowship of the holy in which the gospel is rightly preached, and the sacraments are duly administered: "*Congregatio sanctorum in qua evangelium recte docetur, et recte administrantur sacramenta.*"—*Ep. Martensen.*

3 To denote that vast body of Christians who have, at any time or in any place, departed out of this life in the faith, and fear, and love of God, to live in the world unseen.

[14017] The Church is the people of God throughout all nations, all saints being joined, and thereunto numbered, who lived in this world, even before His coming, so believing that He would come, even as we believe that He hath come.—*Augustine.*

[14018] The invisible Church is made up of the faithful who are dead as far as this life is concerned, but who are alive as to the world to come.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

### III. DOGMATIC DEFINITIONS OF THE CHURCH.

#### 1 The Church of England.

[14019] The Church of England teaches that the Church is "a congregation of faithful men in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that are of necessity requisite to the same.—*Article XIX.*"

#### 2 The Greek.

[14020] The catechism in use in the Greek Church gives the following definition: "The Church is a divinely instituted community of men, united by the orthodox faith, the law of God, the hierarchy, and the sacraments."—*Catechism of the Orthodox Catholic Eastern Church, Moscow, 1839.*

#### 3 The Roman Catholic.

[14021] The Roman Catholic Church says, "The Church is one, because, as the apostle says, there is 'one faith, one Lord, one baptism,' but more especially because it has one invisible Ruler, Christ, and one visible, viz., the occupant for the time being of the Chair of St. Peter at Rome." . . . The Church is holy first, because it is dedicated to God; secondly, because the Church, consisting of good and evil mixed together, is united to Christ, the source of all holiness; thirdly, because to the Church alone has been committed the administration of the sacraments, through which, as efficient instruments of Divine grace, God makes us holy; so that whoever is truly sanctified must be found within the pale of the Church. The Church is Catholic or universal because it is diffused throughout the world, embracing within its pale men of all nations and conditions, and also because it comprehends all who have believed from the beginning, and all who shall believe henceforward to the end of time. The Church is termed apostolic, both because it derives its doctrines from the apostles, whereby it is enabled to convict heretics of error, and because it is governed by an apostolic ministry which is the organ of the Spirit of God.—*Catechism of Trent.*

[14022] The Church is a society of men united by a profession of the same Christian faith, and a participation of the same sacraments, under the government of lawful pastors, and especially of the one Vicar of Christ upon earth, the Roman pontiff.—*Bellarmino.*

#### 4 The Lutheran.

[14023] The Lutheran Church defines the Church to be "a congregation of saints, in which the gospel is purely preached and the sacraments are rightly administered" (Confession of Augsburg). The sum of what we here profess to believe is therefore this: I believe that there is upon earth a certain community of saints, composed solely of holy persons, under one Head, collected together by the Spirit; of one faith and one mind, endowed with manifold

gifts, but united in love and without sects or divisions.—*Luther.*

#### 5 The Scottish.

[14024] The Church is a society of the elect of all ages and countries, both Jews and Gentiles; this is the Catholic or Universal Church. Those who are members of it worship God in Christ and enjoy fellowship with Him through the Spirit. *This Church is invisible, known only to God, who alone knows who are His, and comprehends both the departed in the Lord and the elect upon earth.*—*Conf. Scot, Article XVI.*

#### 6 The Polish.

[14025] There are particular churches and the Church Universal. The true Universal Church is the community of all believers dispersed throughout the world, who are and who remain one Catholic Church so long as they are united by subjection to one Head, Christ, by the indwelling of one spirit and the profession of the same faith; and this, though they be not associated in one common external polity, but, as regards external fellowship and ecclesiastical regimen, be not in communion with each other. A true particular Church is distinguished from a false one by the profession of the true faith, the unimpaired administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of discipline.—*Declaratio Thorunienensis.*

#### 7 The Methodist Episcopal.

[14026] The Catholic Church is the community of all true believers, viz., those who hope in Christ alone for salvation, and are sanctified by His Spirit. It is not attached to any one place or limited to particular persons, the members of it being dispersed throughout the world.—*Anon.*

#### 8 The German Reformed.

[14027] Dr. Gerhart, speaking for the German Reformed Church of America, says, "The Christian Church is a Divine-human constitution in time and space: Divine as to its ultimate ground and interior life, and human as to its form; brought into existence by the miraculous working of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, who is sent by Christ as the bearer of His incarnate life and salvation, in order to continue and develop this life and salvation according to the law of the Spirit in its membership down to the end of time uninterruptedly. As such, it is not a collection of units, but an objective organism, that has a principle, a unity, a law, organs, and resources of power and grace, which are in it and its own absolutely."—*Bibliotheca Sacra.*

[See Introduction to "DOGMATIC" Section, Vol. IV.]

### IV. CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH.

#### 1 Essentially.

*By Christ Himself when on earth.*

[14028] To organize a society, and to bind the members of it together by the closest ties, were



14028—14037]

[THE CHURCH, GENERALLY CONSIDERED.]

the business of Christ's life. For this reason it was that He called men away from their homes, imposed upon some a wandering life, upon others the sacrifice of their property, and endeavoured by all means to divorce them from their former connections in order that they might find a new home in the Church. For this reason He instituted a solemn initiation, and for this reason refused absolutely to give to any one a dispensation from it. For this reason, too, He established a common feast, which was through all ages to remind Christians of their indissoluble union.—*Ecce Homo*.

[14029] The idea of a thing is that conception of it which is furnished us by the knowledge of its ultimate aim. We find this ultimate aim for which Christ called together His disciples, and which He wished to form the one grand object of their joint endeavours, to be the constituting of a brotherhood or community of persons, united by their common reference to one Head, their common profession of one principle, and their common consecration to one end (John x. 14–16, xvii. 20, 21; Eph. iv. 11–13).—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

## 2 Outwardly and actually.

*By inspiration of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost.*

[14030] Prepared for by the theocracy of the old covenant, and more especially by the coming and work of Christ, the Church dates from the first Christian Pentecost, and is in the full sense of the word a creation of the Holy Ghost.—*J. F. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*

[14031] The birthday of the Christian Church was the day of Pentecost, the festival of the Holy Ghost. The Divine Spirit inwardly renewing the disciples and bestowing upon them all needful gifts for the ministry of the Word, thus became the power of their new life, and the inward bond of their association. Thus did the Church originate—as a creation of God, as a work of His Spirit. From this we learn that it is not external forms and customs, but the Holy Ghost, that makes the Church really the Church. He is the soul that fills and animates her, and combines all her individual members into the unity of one body.—*Luthardt*.

## V. HER FAITH.

The Church's faith, as drawn from, and resting on, the Word of God, is expressed in her creeds or confessions.

[14032] At successive periods, as the exigencies of the times have seemed to require, the leading minds of the Christian Church have convened, sometimes by civil, sometimes by ecclesiastical authority, at other times by both, in general councils, when, by consent, the doctrines of the Church have been thrown into the form of confessions or symbols. In these symbols, the floating, undefined, but current beliefs of the general Church have crystallized,

and thus have been transmitted to us. The first, the Apostles' Creed, is universally accepted in the Church, and is of highest authority. There is, however, no evidence that the apostles composed it as it now reads; the best explanation is that it grew into shape from the common and general confession of faith in the primitive Church until it very early assumed the form it now has. It is the germ of all subsequent creed development.—*Encyclopædia*.

[14033] The Nicæno-Constantinopolitan symbol, commonly called the Nicene Creed, was the work of two œcumenical councils in 325 and 381. This has always been of great weight, as chiefly settling the doctrine of the Trinity, and expresses the general view of the Church to this day.—*Ibid*.

[14034] The Chalcedon symbol dates from 451, and was followed by the Athanasian Creed, called after Athanasius, though it is doubtful if he were the author. There were no later confessions until the Reformation, since which we have the Lutheran symbols, the Reformed, the Papal, Confessions of the Greek Church, Arminian and Socinian Confessions; but none of these are of universal authority, as are the original four of the early Church.—*Ibid*.

[See Introduction.]

## VI. HER ATTRIBUTES AND CHARACTERISTICS.

### 1 Unity.

(1) *Its connecting bond.*

a. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

[14035] If the Church consists of those who are united to Christ, and are the members of His body, it is evident that the bond which unites them to Him, unites them to each other. The vital bond between Christ and His body is the Holy Spirit; which He gives to dwell in all who are united to Him by faith. The indwelling of the Spirit is therefore the essential or vital bond of unity in the Church. By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, for we are partakers of that one Spirit. The human body is one, because animated by one soul; and the Church is one, because actuated by one Spirit.—*Taylor Lewis, LL.D.*

[14036] An organ is composed of several instruments—the choir, the swell, the pedal, the great; and many stops, the diapason, the flute, the trumpet; and yet it is one. And the Church of Christ is one. . . . One Spirit—one breath of wind turned on by one living hand makes all the organ vocal.—*Rev. J. Morse (adapted)*.

[14037] The Church considered as the communion of saints is one in faith. The Spirit of God leads His people into all truth. In all ages and in all nations, wherever there are true Christians, you find they have, as to all essential matters, one and the same faith. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of love as well as of truth,

and therefore all those in whom He dwells are one in affection as well as in faith. They have the same inward experience, the same conviction of sin, the same repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the same love of holiness, and desire after conformity to the image of God. There is, therefore, an inward fellowship or congeniality between them, which proves them to be one spirit. In this, the highest and truest sense, the Church is one. It is one body in Christ Jesus. He dwells by His Spirit in all His members, and thus unites them as one living whole, leading all to the belief of the same truths, and binding all in the bond of peace. This is the unity of which the apostle speaks in Eph. iv. 4. Such is the unity which belongs to the Church; it does not belong to any external society, and therefore no such society can be the Church to which the attributes and prerogatives of the body of Christ belong.—*C. Hodges, D.D.*

(2) *Its nature.*

[14038] The Church is one, though she be spread abroad, and multiplies with the increase of her progeny; even as the sun has rays many, yet one light; and the tree boughs many, yet its strength is one, seated in the deep-lodged root. And as when many streams flow down from one source, through a multiplicity of waters, seems to be diffused from the bountifulness of the overflowing abundance, unity is preserved in the source itself. Part a ray of the sun from its orb, and its unity forbids this division of light; break a branch from the tree—once broken, it can bud no more; cut the stream from its foundation, the remnant will be dried up. Thus the Church, flooded with the light of the Lord, puts forth her rays through the whole world; yet with one light which is spread over all places, while its unity of body is not infringed. She stretches forth her branches over the whole earth in the riches of plenty, and pours abroad her beautiful and onward streams, yet is there one head, one source, one mother, abundant in the results of her fruitfulness.—*St. Cyprian.*

[14039] One of the earliest images under which the unity of Christendom was described was that of many streams flowing from one source. The longer the streams flow, the greater will be their divergence; but the divergence is due to progress, and does not in any way destroy the original unity of the waters which pass along the various courses. But the streams will not always be divided. They start from one source and they end in one ocean. They have been united outwardly, and they will again be united. Meanwhile the fashion of their currents is moulded by the country through which they pass, and this in turn furnishes the peculiar elements which they bear down to their common resting-place to form the foundations of a world to come.—*Canon Westcott.*

[14040] The term unity is applicable to the Universal Church, as one in reference to its

Supreme Head in heaven, not as one community on earth, as the human race is one in respect of the One Creator and Governor; but this does not make it one family or one state.—*Abp. Whately.*

(3) *Its manifestation in diversity.*

[14041] As there are not Lords many, but one Lord; as there are not many Spirits, but one Holy Ghost; as there are not many humanities, but one Humanity; which is to be united with Christ the Head; so certainly there is but one Church (Eph. iv. 6). But this true unity reveals itself in variety and manifoldness. We see, even in the first and apostolic Church, how the One Spirit revealed Himself in many gifts, and how the One Christ is represented in various aspects by the apostles. In its relation with the world, with various nationalities, and at different stages of human development, the one Church has been divided by a variety of confessions, and by different *formulae*, or Church symbols. In so far as these differences of creed are the result of sin, they must be looked upon as perishable fragments, which must be cast away; but so far as they have their foundation in the necessary varieties of human life, they will be established and purified, and they should be viewed as gifts of grace, and types of apostolic doctrine. These various confessions must be looked upon as various chambers, various dwellings in the house of the one Lord. "In My Father's house are many mansions" (John xiv. 2). To distinguish what is erroneous and sinful in these confessions, from what has its foundation only in the actual varieties of human life, is among the most difficult tasks of ecclesiastical history, and constitutes the main difficulty in all questions of Church union.—*Ep. Martensen.*

(4) *Means of its promotion among the members of the Church.*

a. By mutual concession, wherever agreement may lawfully exist, without danger of compromising the true doctrines of the Church of God.

[14042] The members of the Church are, as such, members one of another, as intimate in sympathy and co-operation as the hand and foot, the eye and the ear, in the human body; and, God giving to each its peculiar gift according to its ministration and through His Holy Spirit, the whole body is full of life and energy, and daily grows, like the body of a young person, towards the state of manhood. So that we must beware of giving offence to one another; of interfering with one another's province; must be careful to be of the same mind, in all lowliness of mutual submission, paying all attention to our social duties, which, indeed, are our religious also. Thus the body of Christ is built up, each one building up his neighbour; thus it is a temple of God built of lively stones, properly adjusted in pressure and thrust.—*R. W. Evans, B.A.*

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[14043] External, visible unity is not required for the essential unity of the Church. The congregations of Jewish and Gentile Christians were no less one in Christ, though the outward fellowship between them was imperfect or wanting: their common life lay deeper than the controversies which tended to keep them apart. Their isolation was a proof of imperfection, but not of death. What errors are deadly, it does not fall to our part to attempt to determine. It is enough to observe that differences of opinion which were once thought by many to be fatal to unity were really consistent with it. The promise of Christ does not reach to the unity of the outward fold at any time. "Other sheep," He said, "I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall become one flock, one Shepherd"—one flock in however many folds it be gathered, because it listens to the voice of the One Shepherd.—*Canon Westcott.*

[14044] If I could only say it without its going abroad, I would say that I rejoice in the progress of the Roman Catholic Church a great deal more than I should rejoice in the progress of no Church at all. I believe the wells of salvation are opened within the pale of that great Church, where men draw water unto everlasting life; and I believe there is a great band of consecrated men there who are doing the work of the Lord Jesus Christ just as faithfully as we are attempting to do it in the Protestant denominations.—*H. Ward Beecher.*

[14045] It would be ridiculous for me to assume to like Romanism. I as a man of routine, as a man of ceremony, as a man of symbol, as a man of imperious sectarian doctrine, organization, and order—how I should look! I am the very antithesis of anything of the sort. And yet, standing at this very opposite extreme, I say that I will believe in good wherever I see good, though that with which it is connected is contrary to every association and tendency of my nature. And I rejoice that while the Roman Catholic Church has something in its hand to give us, we have some things to give them. We have given them our revivals. What they call "missions" are revivals with us. We have given them the Sunday-school. And we are receiving from them not a few gifts which mingle with our sterner grace, and which I hope will make us richer and better.—*Ibid.*

[14046] Let professing Christians consider only the number, the grandeur, the awful importance of the fundamental points in which they all agree, and their agreement in which constitutes them Christians—let them take the primitive creed, and ponder what it is to acknowledge together one God and Father—one Lord and Saviour—one Holy Ghost the Comforter,—to possess one refuge for the needy—one consolation for the guilty—one strength for the weak—one rule of action for the perplexed

—one rest for the weary—one life for the dying—one eternal home for all the family of God now scattered abroad,—till all subordinate points be not indeed effaced, but kept in their subordination—not tamed into an insincere (because constrained) monotony; but harmonized into a full-voiced choir by their proportionate relation to one fundamental bass—not concealed and huddled up under the white robe of an hypocritical (because impossible) candour, but woven in all their variegated tints and shades into a seamless web, where all are different but the whole is one.—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

[14047] What were the Churches, and the individual members of each Church, divided upon, in the Apostolic times? On points no less extensive and momentous than the being circumcised, or uncircumcised—the retaining the Mosaic customs, or the entire rejection of them—the adopting the order of the synagogue worship, or the freer exercise of the Spirit of God—the abstaining from particular kinds of food, or the indiscriminate participation with all persons, of all meats;—principles and practices which spread through all the conduct, and affected the daily life and manners, and bore upon the social intercourse and the devotional meetings, of the Christian communities. And yet none of them, with all the marked and the minute distinctions which they caused, were permitted by St. Paul to burst the bonds of mutual fellowship in Christ (1 Cor. vii. 18, 19, xii. 12; Rom. xiv.) Oh, what a refreshment is it, amidst the struggles of party, and the strife of tongues, to find such passages as these! They are like an unexpectedly discovered fountain in the wilderness—like the water of the well of Bethlehem to the harassed David in the midst of the Philistines—like a draught of living water to the parched and wayworn searcher after truth, from

"—Siloa's brook that flow'd  
Fast by the oracle of God."—*Ibid.*

## 2 Holiness.

*Holiness makes the Church a living body, and, consequently, the means and agent of its own growth and happiness.*

[14048] A living thing grows from itself and not by accretion from without, as a house or a ship grows. A flower does not grow by adding a leaf to it, nor a tree by fastening a branch to it, nor a man by fixing a limb to his frame. Everything that has life grows by a converting process, which transforms the food into means of nourishment and enlargement. A holy Church lives, and its holiness converts all its ordinances and provisions into means of deep-rooted, solid, enlarged, and beautiful usefulness.—*Dr. Jenkyn.*

[14049] Apart from holiness all is partial and perishable. The holy Church stands out distinctly from the world: it does not take its rise from a merely natural development, like the kingdoms of the world, nor from the self-development of the spirit of man. God, the



Holy Ghost, is the author and principle of its growth.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[14050] The Holy Spirit, who abides within the Church, is her invisible preserver and reformer, withstanding the encroachments of worldliness; and though particular churches may lose their spiritual life in the world, the Church herself can never become secularized. Notwithstanding corruptions, notwithstanding relative pauses and backslidings, the Church holds on her course, and cannot miss her final goal. *Ecclesia non potest deficere.*—*Ibid.*

### 3 Catholicity.

*Its nature and characteristics.*

[14051] Catholicity does not mean toleration and compromise. It means the gathering up of all aspects of truly Christian converse with God into a unity of devotional expression in which every believer can join.—*Robertson Smith, D.D.*

[14052] The Church is one, because it embraces all the people of God. The Church is one, because there is none other. Those out of the Church are, therefore, out of Christ. This is the universal faith of Christendom. All denominations, in all ages, have, agreeably to the plain teaching of the Scriptures, and the very nature of the gospel, maintained that there is no salvation out of the Church; in other words, that the Church is Catholic, embracing all the people of God in all parts of the world.—*C. Lodge, D.D.*

[14053] Kepler and Newton, substituting the idea of the infinite for the conception of a finite and determined world, assumed in the Ptolemaic Astronomy, superseded and drove out the notion of a one central point or body of the universe; and, finding a centre in every point of matter, and an absolute circumference nowhere, explained at once the unity and the distinction that co-exist throughout the creation by focal instead of central bodies, the attractive and restraining power of the sun or focal orb in each particular system, supposing and resulting from an actual power, present in all and over all, throughout an indeterminable multitude of systems—and this, demonstrated as it has been by science, and verified by observation, we rightly name the true system of the heavens. And even such is the scheme and true idea of the Christian Church.—*S. T. Coleridge.*

[14054] The use of the term Catholic originated in the sub-apostolic period; for, although the article of the creed in which it occurs found no place in the earliest extant forms of that venerable confession, the phrase "the Catholic Church" is found in a well-known passage in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Christian society in Smyrna.—*W. Binnie, D.D.*

[14055] The Samaritan's inn was called "Open Doors," because it gave entertainment to all strangers (Luke x. 30, 34). In St. Peter's sheet

were all sorts of creatures—four-footed beasts and creeping things (Acts x. 12). The net mentioned in the Gospel caught all kind of fish (Matt. xiii. 47). Ahasuerus' feast welcomed all comers (Esth. i. 4). Such is the Gospel Church in its amplitude. The prophetic gospel was hedged in and limited within the pale of Palestine; but the apostolic gospel is spread over the face of the whole earth; then it was a light under a bushel, now the light of the world.—*J. Spencer.*

[14056] Catholicity is an attribute of the Church in regard of these four particulars—its *diffusiveness*, as being spread through the whole world; because it holds the *whole* truth; because it requires the obedience of *all* men to *all* its precepts; and lastly, by reason of *all* saving graces being given in it.—*T. P. Boulbee, LL.D.*

[14057] As all commonwealths are originally based upon some common quality, and for the most part on a blood relationship, real or supposed, of the members, so is the Christian Church based upon a blood relationship, but the most comprehensive of all, the kindred of every human being to every other. It is, therefore, absolutely open to all human beings who choose to become members of it.—*Ecce Homo.*

[14058] The word Catholic means "throughout the whole." And when the Church is so called, it is meant that she is Catholic as regards time, place, and faith. The Church will exist for all time (Matt. xvi. 18, &c.). She is the same in every place. Whether her members are English, Italian, Russian, or of any other nation, they all belong to the same Catholic Church. Moreover, she is the same in all essential points of doctrine, or faith. The religious "sects" only exist because they deny some one or more of the doctrines of the Church. But whatever heresies there may be in any portion of the Church, she retains all the foundation truths of Christianity. Some portions may have added to the faith doctrines created by heresy, but in each branch of the Church there still remains the whole Catholic Faith.—*Rev. D. J. White, M.A.*

### 4 Perpetuity.

(1) *The kingdom of Christ on earth cannot be moved, because it is that on account of which all others exist.*

[14059] God perpetuates the race, and ordains governments, and exercises a universal providence over the evil and the good, for the reason that He has a people which He will take out of all nations and races. For this the wicked live, because in their generations are numbered the elect; for this empires are founded, and flourish and fall; for this the tares and the wheat grow together till the harvest; for this "the heathen are permitted to rage and the people to imagine a vain thing." All temporal kingdoms are but scaffolding for the building of God; all revolu-

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tions tend to accomplish His designs. Wars break down the barriers which prevent the progress of the gospel; migrations for gold are caravans to carry the Bible and the missionary of the cross to the dark places of the earth. God and the Church are the explanation of history, without which it is a dark unreadable enigma.—*J. C. Lord, D.D.*

[14060] The historical unity of the Church is its perpetuity; its remaining one and the same in all ages. In this sense, also, the true Church is one. It is now what it was in the days of the apostles. It has continued the same without interruption, from the beginning, and is to continue until the final consummation; for the gates of hell can never prevail against it. About this there is no dispute; all Christians admit the Church to be in this sense perpetual.

(2) *Its permanence is insured by the Divinity of its Head as co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Ghost.*

[14061] The two natures of the God-man Mediator may be said to symbolize the two aspects under which His Church may be viewed; in one we see the weakness and changeableness of finite things, in the external order of His visible kingdom, in its exposedness to corruption, declensions, and heresies; in its various dispensations and changing rituals; in the other, we see the law of absolute permanency in the one faith and the one sacrament preserved in all generations.—*J. C. Lord, D.D.*

[14062] To the mystical body of Christ alone belongs that perpetuity which is an attribute of the Church. This is the Church which is apostolical, or historically one. It is one and the same Church which the apostles founded. It traces up its descent to Christ, the Head, without a breach or flaw. It has never ceased to be. It has never ceased to be holy and to be orthodox. Though often dispersed and hidden from the sight of men, it has continued in the sight of God, who has ever reserved to Himself a company that never bowed the knee unto Baal. Every external Church has lapsed from faith and purity; but the true Church lives on, in mystic union with its Head, receiving and giving life, from age to age.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

## 5 Vitality.

*Its manifestations.*

In its very divisions, its progress, and its adversity.

[14063] Do not the very divisions afford an indirect illustration of the extraordinary vitality of the new kingdom? Has the kingdom ceased to enlarge its territory since the troubled times of the sixteenth century? On the contrary, it is simply a matter of fact that, since that date, its ratio of extension has been greater than at any previous period. The philosopher who supposes that the Church is on the point of dying out because of her divisions must be strangely insensible to the higher convictions

which are increasingly prevailing in the minds of men.—*Canon Liddon.*

[14064] In our own days, and after the lapse of eighteen centuries, the Church's influence is gradually extending among the civilized populations of Asia; it is redeeming the races of Central and Southern Africa from barbarism; it is giving intellectual culture and a higher morality, as well as a purer faith, to the scattered tribes of the Pacific Ocean; and, notwithstanding all adverse appearances, it is, I believe, maintaining its power over the kindred nations of Europe and America.—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

[14065] The Church hath always been a lily among thorns, yet flourishes still. This bush is yet far from a consumption, although it has seldom or never been out of the fire.—*Arrowsmith.*

[14066] Believe that how low soever the Church be plunged under the waters of adversity, it shall assuredly rise again. There is no fear of ruining that people that thrive by their losses, and multiply by being diminished. Oh, be not too quick to bury the Church before she is dead! stay till Christ hath tried His skill before you give up all for lost; the bush may be all in a flame, but shall never be consumed, and that because of the good-will of Him that dwelleth in it.—*Flavel.*

## 6 Invincibility.

*The Church has ever been, and will ever be, triumphant throughout all time.*

[14067] The Church's victory is not only a final one at the end of time; it is a progressive victory in every age. Herein consists the triumph of the Church in history; in virtue of the indwelling Spirit, she continually renews herself; after every interval of corruption and dissolution, when she lay in ruins, when faith seemed to be vanquished by the world, she has risen anew, like life from the dead. That vision of the prophet Ezekiel—wherein he saw the valley of dry bones, and, behold, they were very dry, and the Spirit of the Lord came from the four winds, and breathed upon the slain, and they lived again, and the breath came into them;—that vision is a parable of the spiritual resurrection of the Church, repeated in her history from age to age. This fact that the Church has never wholly died out, but ever rises anew from the dead, is a pledge, a certain surety, of her future glory.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[14068] The Church is the anvil on which all hammers have been broken.—*Beza.*

[14069] The very existence of the Church supposes a ceaseless interposition of the almighty arm. It is a standing miracle that there should be a nominal Christianity and a large and powerful Christian Church. Yet the current of the world, the tide of human affairs, has always been opposed to her. Persecutions, wave after wave, have rolled over her. Civil power, philo-

sophy, history, science, poetry, fashion, custom, wit, have all in their turn been made engines to assail the impregnable fortress of Christianity. Intrigue has spared no wicked device to undermine her foundations; cruelty and unrelenting hate have poured out the vials of their wrath; heresy, infidelity, and misguided zeal, have, in their turn, done what they could to prostrate the fair fabric of religion, or so to undermine confidence in her, to arrest or neutralize her benevolent influences, as to make her appear to the world of little worth. And what has been the result? The Church has outlived every storm. She has passed unscathed by the lightnings of human violence. Like the oak that strikes its roots deeper, and clings to its rocky soil the more tenaciously, as the storm beats and the tempest rages, the Church has been strengthened amid the rigours of persecution, and nourished by the blood of her martyrs.—*Read.*

[14070] Such as we, hoping in the Son of God, are being persecuted and trodden down by unbelievers. For the different Churches are the wings of ships, but the sea is the world, in which the Church is tossed as a ship in storms, but perishes not, for she hath Christ with her.—*Hippolytus.*

#### 7 Supremacy.

[14071] This Divine control, inscrutably operative, supports the Church as it supports all things—nay, supports all things in subserviency to the Church; for as the dead unorganized world is maintained with a view to the vegetable world, and the vegetable with a view to the animal world, and the animal with a view to the intellectual world, and the intellectual with a view to the moral, so the moral world itself exists with a view to that spiritual state, between which and the Spirit that gives it, even angels are not worthy to be the interval!—*W. Archer Butler.*

#### VII. HER DIVINE HEAD.

[14072] There are two opinions as to the meaning of the phrase "fulness of Christ," between which commentators are principally divided: First, the Church may be called the fulness of Christ, because it is filled by Him. As the body is filled or pervaded by the soul, so the Church is filled by the Spirit of Christ; or, as God of old dwelt in the temple, and filled it with His glory, so Christ now dwells in His Church and fills it with His presence. The sense is then good and scriptural: "The Church is filled by Him who fills all in all." Or, secondly, the Church is the fulness of Christ, because it fills Him, *i.e.*, completes His mystical person. He is the head, the Church is the body. As both these interpretations give a sense that is scriptural and consistent with the context, the choice between them must be decided principally by the New Testament usage of the word *πληρομα*. The common usage of the word in the New Testament is in favour of its being

taken in an active sense here. The Church is the fulness of Christ, in that it is the complement of His mystic person. He is the head, the Church is His body. In favour of the other interpretation it may be urged: 1. That *πληρομα* has in the classics, in Philo, in the writings of the Gnostics, at times, a passive sense. 2. The meaning thus afforded is preferable. It is a more scriptural and more intelligible statement to say that Christ fills His Church, as the soul pervades the body, or as the glory of the Lord filled the temple, than to say that the Church in any sense fills Christ. 3. *Πληρομα* must be taken in a sense which suits the participle *πληρουμένου*—"The Church is filled by Him who fills all things." The second and third of these reasons are so strong as to give this interpretation the preference in the minds of those to whom the *usus loquendi* is not an insuperable objection.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

[14073] The presence of Christ only consecrates and constitutes a Church. There cannot be a living body without a living head: a man dies if you deprive him of his head. So deprive a Church of its Head, and it is dead. There cannot be a court without a king, and there cannot be a Church without Christ in it.—*Dr. Guthrie.*

#### VIII. HER SACRED MISSION.

I In the widest sense, the Church has to reclaim a recreant world to God and His Christ.

[14074] Man is in rebellion: the Church is to subdue him. Man is lost: the Church is to point him to safety. Men are groaning and travelling together in pain: the Church is to tell them of a great physician, and thus to do for the world what the angel did for the pool when he rendered its waters healing. Men are debased: the Church is to elevate them. They are savage: she is to tame them. They are polluted: she is to lead them to the ever open fountain. Man, moreover, is a slave: the Church is appointed to proclaim liberty to the captive, through the great Deliverer, "the desire of all nations."—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review.*

[14075] Boileau says somewhere that the Church is a great thought which every man ought to study: it would be more practical to say that the Church is a great fact which every man ought to measure. Probably we Christians are too familiarized with the blessed presence of the Church to do justice to her as a world-embracing institution, and as the nurse and guardian of our moral and mental life. Like the air we breathe, she bathes our whole being with influences which we do not analyze; and we hold her cheap in proportion to the magnitude of her unostentatious service. The sun rises on us day by day in the heavens, and we heed not his surpassing beauty until our languid



sense is roused by some observant astronomer or artist. The Christian Church pours even upon those of us who love her least, floods of intellectual and moral light; and yet it is only by an occasional intellectual effort that we detach ourselves sufficiently from the tender monotony of her influences, to understand how intrinsically extraordinary is the double fact of her perpetuated existence and of her continuous expansion.—*Canon Liddon.*

[14076] The object of a Church—whether it be established by law, or a purely voluntary association—is not liberty, but service; and by its special aptitude to render that service, and not by the amount of liberty its members enjoy in theological speculations, must its value be judged. A Church is good, according as it promotes religion; just as a college is good, as it trains well finished scholars; and an army, as it constitutes the invincible defence of a nation. It may be, and no doubt is, important that, consistently with the attainment of these ends, the clergyman, the professor, and the soldier, should enjoy a large measure of liberty; but the liberty, nevertheless, is but the incident, not the aim of the institution.—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review.*

[14077] His Church is the court of holy love, filled with offices and appointments of charity and grace. Here we are to look on the faults of others, only to pray for, and assist in, their improvement; and to contemplate their excellences, only to admire and imitate. The fluid which is about to crystallize does not more certainly assume the form of the crystal inserted into it, than believers modify and accelerate the formation of their character by associating in Christian fellowship; and all assimilate to Christ, their common type and centre; according to His prayer, they become one in Him.—*J. Harris, D.D.*

[14078] The world has forfeited its life; its relieve has been procured by the atonement of Christ; and the Church is entrusted with the delivery of the relieve into the hands of a world under condemnation—a commission which would have conferred distinction on angelic intelligences.—*T. W. Jewkyn, D.D.*

[14079] The true and grand idea of a Church is a society for the purpose of making men like Christ, earth like heaven, the kingdoms of the world the kingdom of Christ.—*Rev. Thomas Arnold.*

[14080] The work of the minister at home, and of the missionary abroad, is the same. Only in so far as the truth to be proclaimed, and the end to be sought—the starting-point and the goal—are the same. The whole course between is as different in each case as the obstacles which oppose the progress of the truth are different. The chief foe which the home missionary has to encounter is irreligion; the chief foe which the foreign missionary has to

encounter is religion. The evangelist who goes among the godless masses of our population has to deal just with their godlessness. The foreign missionary, on the other hand, finds the religious faculty in full exercise in those with whom he has to deal, occupied with a counterpart of that which occupies his own. His difficulty with them is, not that they are godless, but, as Paul found the men of Athens, that they are too “gods-revering.”—*J. Robson, M.A.*

[14081] A Church's mission is not to make men philosophers, although it teaches the best philosophy; nor to make scientific explorations, although it is the best friend of science; nor to organize governments and write constitutions, although its inculcations lead to the wisest political economy. But to balk profligacy, to dethrone superstition, to emancipate spiritual bondage, to break in twain the prison bolts, to soothe human pain, to turn the human race on to the high pathway of heaven—this is the Church's mission; and whatever cross it may have on the church-top, and however beautiful an altar or pulpit-font, and however high-sounding and magnificent the service, failing in this, it fails in all. It may be a brazen candlestick, or a bronze candlestick, but not a golden candlestick.—*Talmage.*

[14082] The Church must grope her way into the alleys, and courts, and purlieus of the city, and up the broken staircase, and into the bare room, and beside the loathsome sufferer; she must go down into the pit with the miner, into the forecastle with the sailor, into the tent with the soldier, into the shop with the mechanic, into the factory with the operative, into the field with the farmer, into the counting-room with the merchant. Like the air, the Church must press equally on all the surfaces of society; like the sea, flow into every nook of the shore-line of humanity; and like the sun, shine on things foul and low as well as fair and high, for she was organized, commissioned, and equipped for the moral renovation of the whole world.—*Bp. Simpson.*

2 The Church is delegated to zealously guard, and faithfully transmit the Word of God.

[14083] Faithfully to maintain God's message of salvation, personally to live upon it, and ministerially to preach it throughout the world, is the appointed office of the Church; the instrument of her conflict and the crown of her glory.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

[14084] Christianity has called the Church into existence, not the Church Christianity. Great and noble has been the mission of the Church, blessed and beneficent her influence; but the revealed truth entrusted to her keeping is greater than herself. She is a witness to her glorified Master, and in the sense of her own dignity to forget for a moment the undivided supremacy of her living Head, is to cut away

the ground beneath her own feet. The chased and ornamental cup is beautiful to the eye, but its use is to convey the water to the parched lips of the dying man. The failing senses of the suffering wretch will not heed the beauty of the cup if it be empty of the living water. The glory of the Church is in the faith committed to her charge; and her life and strength are both alike laid up in Him whom the faith represents as "the way, the truth, and the life," and on whose brow the adoring hands of the saints place the triple crown, Prophet, Priest, King.—*Ibid.*

## IX. HER GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION.

### 1 The Scripture basis of Church government.

[14085] In settling the government of a Church there are pre-existent laws of Christ, which it is not in the option of any to receive or to reject. Under whatever form the governing power is arranged, it is bound to execute all the rules left by Christ and His apostles, as to doctrine, worship, the sacraments, and discipline, honestly interpreted. As it is imperative upon rulers in the State to be "a terror to evildoers, and a praise to them that do well," so also is it imperative upon the rulers of the Church to banish strange doctrines, to uphold God's ordinances, to reprove and rebuke, and, finally, to put away evildoers. The spirit in which this is to be done is also prescribed. It is to be done in the spirit of meekness, and with long-suffering; but the work must be done upon the responsibility of the pastors to Him who has commissioned them for this purpose; and they have a right to require from the people, that in this office and ministry they should not only not be obstructed, but affectionately and zealously aided, as ministering in these duties, sometimes painful, not for themselves, but for the good of the whole.—*R. Watson.*

[14086] The true view of the case appears to be, that the government of the Church is in its pastors, open to various modifications as to form; and that it is to be conducted with such a concurrence of the people as shall constitute a sufficient guard against abuse, and yet not prevent the legitimate and efficient exercise of pastoral duties, as these duties are stated in the Scriptures.—*Ibid.*

[14087] The mode of public worship in the primitive Church was taken from the synagogue service, as was its arrangement of offices. Each synagogue had its rulers, elders, or presbyters, of whom one was the angel of the Church, or minister of the synagogue, who superintended the public service; directed those that read the Scriptures, offered up the prayers, and blessed the people. The president of the council of elders or rulers was called, by way of eminence, the "ruler of the synagogue"; and in some places, as Acts xiii. 15, we read of these "rulers"

in the plural number—a sufficient proof that one was not elevated in order above the rest. The angel of the Church and the minister of the synagogue might be the same as he who was invested with the office of president; or these offices might be held by others of the elders. Lightfoot, indeed, states that the rulers in each synagogue were three, whilst the presbyters or elders were ten. To this council of grave and wise men the affairs of the synagogue, both as to worship and discipline, were committed. In the synagogue they sat by themselves in a semicircle, and the people before them, face to face. This was the precise form in which the bishop and presbyters used to sit in the primitive churches. Ordination of presbyters or elders is also from the Jews. Their priests were not ordained, but succeeded to their office by birth; but the rulers and elders of the synagogue received ordination by imposition of hands and prayer. Such was the model which the apostles followed in providing for the future regulation of the churches they had raised up.—*Ibid.*

[14088] Nothing may be considered as more certainly established than that the synagogical platform of polity was that which furnished a pattern to the Christian Church.—*E. A. Litton.*

[14089] The Church of God is a theocracy. And the grand idea of a theocracy is the reign of law—the authoritative rule of the Divine Word—the government not by persons, but by principles; or by persons only as the subordinate administrators of principles—the executive of law. This was symbolized in the Jewish Church by the sovereignty being jealously reserved to God Himself—His throne being set up in the Holy of Holies, His presence-chamber—and that throne having laid up in it His written Word, the tablets graven by His own hand with the law which issued from His own mouth. And this great principle is asserted by our blessed Lord with reference to the Christian Church when He suspends the ministerial ability and authority, even of the apostles, on their fidelity to the Word that He had taught them (John xv. 3-7). All legitimate authority in the Church of Christ is the authority of the Divine Word. Christ alone is the head of the Church, administering its affairs under the Lord paramount, the Almighty Father. This head is invisible, and His presence is represented by the body of truth contained in the Holy Bible, the "testimony" enshrined in that sacred Ark of the Covenant.—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

### 2 The vested authority of the Church.

#### *Its exercise and its limits.*

[14090] The ends to which Church authority is legitimately directed are, first, the preservation and publication of sound doctrine. Against false doctrines, and the men "of corrupt minds" who taught them, the sermons of Christ, and the writings of the apostles, abound in cautions; and since St. Paul lays it down as a rule, as to

erring teachers, that their "mouths must be stopped," this implies, that the power of declaring what sound doctrine is, and of silencing false teachers, was confided by the apostles to the future Church. The second end is, the forming of such regulations for the conduct of its ministers, officers, and members, as shall establish a common order for worship; facilitate the management of the affairs of the community, spiritual, economical, and financial; and give a right direction to the general conduct of the whole society.—*Anon.*

[14091] The only legitimate ends of all directions and rules are, the edification of the Church, the preservation of its practical purity, the establishment of an influential order and decorum in its services, and the promotion of its usefulness to the world. The general principles by which they are to be controlled are the spirituality, simplicity, and practical character of Christianity.—*Ibid.*

[14092] The apostles themselves, though aware of an authority and power being devolved upon them by the Divine Founder of the Church Himself, such as to no others were vouchsafed, yet speak as little as possible in a commanding tone, and seek as much as possible to act, in all things which concern the several Christian communities, with the free co-operation of those communities themselves. And as to what regards the relation of the primitive Presbyters to the churches, their office was not that of absolute monarchs, but of presidents and directors of an ecclesiastical republic, whose general judgment they consulted, and for whom they acted, not as sovereign masters, but as the administrators of the general will.—*Neander.*

[14093] From the very nature of the Church as a society we might determine unhesitatingly that its authority must be spiritual only in its nature. It may not express its displeasure at the violation of its enactments by any temporal sanctions. It may not inflict bodily penalties; it may not sequester worldly estate. It may not put out of civil or domestic connections; or it may not thrust its members into the power of any to impose civil or domestic restrictions or annoyances of any kind. May it, however, use the power of disgrace, mortification, of mental disturbance of any kind? The power to exclude from its fellowship such as are unworthy of it is given it expressly in the very word of its founder and head; impliedly, in the very allowance of its existence on earth as an organic body. All such as are in legitimate ways found to be radically wanting in the essential qualifications of Church membership, it is bound to declare to be thus wanting, and to exclude them.—*Prof. H. N. Day.*

[14094] Excommunication is not to be regarded as the execution of a sanction. It answers precisely to that act of the civil society by which it should declare the relations of citizenship to be annulled in case of voluntary and

final removal from within its proper territory.—*Ibid.*

### 3 Ecclesiastical discipline.

(1) *Its desirableness and value.*

[14095] Ecclesiastical censure is not a penal infliction, but a moral discipline for the reformation of the offender and the honour of religion. . . . Church discipline seeks, in the kindness of Christian love, to recover a fallen brother, to aid him in his spiritual conflicts, and to save him from hopeless ruin.—*Coleman.*

[14096] In the ringing of bells, whilst every one keeps his time and order, what a sweet and harmonious sound they make! All the neighbouring villages are cheered; but when once they jar and check each other, either jangling together or striking preposterously, how harsh and unpleasant is the noise! So that as we testify our public rejoicing by an orderly and well-timed peal, we ring the bells backward in a confused manner when we would signify the town is on fire. It is just thus in the Church: when every one knows his station, and keeps his due rank, there is a melodious concert of comfort and contentment; but when persons will be clashing with each other, the discord is grievous and extremely prejudicial. And so in the Church, take away discipline, and the doctrine will not be long after.—*J. Spencer.*

[14097] A Church in which, in the moral domain, all the bonds of discipline and order are rent asunder, can as little be called the true Church as a household without oversight and guidance may be called a model for a Christian family.—*J. J. Van Oosterzee.*

(2) *Its perverted use and consequent depreciation.*

[14098] The infliction and removal of censures is a power the abuse of which, and the extravagant lengths to which it has been carried, have led some wholly to deny it, or to treat it slightly; but it is nevertheless deposited with every scriptural church.—*R. Watson.*

### X. HER RELATION TO THE WORLD.

The Church of Christ, ever militant with the world around, finds therein her true sphere of glorifying God.

[14099] The more the Church of Christ is persecuted, and the more it suffers by crucifixion, by bonds, by torments, by death from wild beasts, the more is the confession of Christ and faith in Christ made known; and so the more men do become faithful to the name of Jesus, and acknowledge His favour.—*Ignatius.*

[14100] Our crucifying of or to the world requireth not any secession from the world, nor a withdrawing ourselves from the society of men, nor the casting away the property or possession of the necessities which we possess. It is an easier thing to throw away our master's



talents than faithfully to improve them.—*R. Baxter.*

[14101] The world punishes us for our refusal to conform to its customs and its laws—for our refusal to fall down and worship the golden image which its leaders have set up. The hatred of the world to the Church is an ever-abiding hatred, and one which constantly breaks out in the persecution of Christian men. Loyalty to the claims of Jesus to guide the life by Christian morality, and to command the obedience of the intellect to the Christian faith, provokes hatred to-day as much as it ever did. See this spirit in the sustained persecution for the faith which the Christian is often called on to brave in the home, the shop, the office, or the school. God alone knows when this passion will become incapable of restraint, and when the Church shall need her martyrs again.—*Anon.*

## XI. HER MATERIAL SIDE.

[14102] The Church of Christ enters into human history, and her annals are intertwined with those of the kingdoms of this world; more, they have been at times chequered with degradation and crime. She interpenetrates natural society; and she has relations to civil governments, which are matters of ordinary business and discussion. Her ministers are, like other men, in their individual capacity, liable to infirmities and to error, and depending for their usefulness very largely upon their personal character and individual acquirements. Her doctrines are stated in human language; sometimes in the very language which more natural thought has employed in the service of human philosophy. Her Scriptures, at first sight, are like any other book; they are poetry, history, ethics, correspondence. Her sacraments are, viewed on their outward side, the simplest of rites;—a little water sprinkled on an infant brow;—a little bread and wine dealt out to a company of kneeling and silent guests.—*Canon Liddon.*

## XII. HER DISTINCTIVE HISTORY.

[14103] Ecclesiastical history may be divided into the history of the Church, strictly so called, history of prophecy, and history of Providence.

The first describes the times of the militant Church, whether it be fluctuant, as the ark of Noah, or movable, as the ark in the wilderness, or at rest, as the ark in the temple; that is, the state of the Church in persecution, in transition, and in peace.

The second, history of prophecy, consists of two parts, the prophecy, and the accomplishment; and therefore the nature of such a work ought to be, that every prophecy of the Scripture be sorted with the event fulfilling the same, throughout the ages of the world, allowing nevertheless that latitude which is agreeable and familiar unto Divine prophecies, being of the nature of their Author, with whom "a thousand

years are but as one day, and one day as a thousand years," and therefore are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have accomplishment throughout many ages; though the height or fullness of them may refer to some one age.

The third, history of Providence, contains that Divine correspondence which is between God's revealed will and His secret will, which though it be so obscure, that for the most part it is not legible for the natural man—no, nor many times to those that behold it from the tabernacle—yet, at some times, it pleased God, for our better establishment, and the confuting of those which are "without God in the world," to write it in such text and capital letters, that, as the prophet saith, "he that runneth by may read it;" that is, mere sensual persons, which hasten by God's judgments, and never bend or fix their thoughts upon them, yet are nevertheless in their passage and race urged to discern it. Such are the notable events and examples of God's judgments, chastisements, deliverances, and blessings.—*Lord Bacon.*

[14104] The Church's history is as conspicuous as the sun in the midst of the heavens. As clearly as we can trace the day backwards to its dawn, can we trace her life back to the Christian era. In the 750th year of Rome she was not in existence. A hundred years later she not only existed, but had spread so widely from Palestine over the provinces of the Roman world, and had struck her roots so deeply into the hearts and consciences of mankind, that the whole strength of the iron empire was inadequate to destroy her. In the 850th year of Rome the Church was already a power in the world, with a definite faith and a collection of sacred books, and an internal organization and an active missionary agency. The links of her unbroken succession from that time to this are among the most indisputable facts of human history.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

## XIII. OBLIGATIONS OF HER MEMBERS.

I To show forth in the life the Spirit's influence on the soul.

[14105] The health of a Church depends not merely on the creed which it professes, not even on the wisdom and holiness of a few great ecclesiastics, but on the faith and virtue of its individual members.—*Charles Kingsley.*

[14106] "Go to: I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down; and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it." This sentence is terrible; but God faithfully executes it. He withdraws all providential succours: the Church is left to be the sport of men and things. Ordinances remain, but not the blessing of them; the Bible is a sealed book; prayer

only a mechanical mockery; and sacraments just the hollow compliance with a command which in such a state it were less breach of duty to neglect altogether. Nothing shall spring up or flourish; the root shall be as a barren place, and the very ground as dust. Finally, and as if to prevent one ray of hope lighting up the dark picture, the influence of the Blessed Spirit, the only life-giving power to dead and paralysed and sin-stricken souls, shall be withholden. The bottles of heaven shall be stayed; the clouds shall keep back their fatness; and death—spiritual death—reign everywhere. And, oh! the fault of this dreadful curse rests with the Church, not with God.—*D. Moore.*

[14107] There is not a moment of a man's life in which he may not be indirectly preaching and teaching, both strangers and friends; his children, his servants, and all who are in any way put under him being given to him as special objects of his ministration.—*Ruskin.*

3 To recognize, on the part of the State, the duties incumbent on its civil relationship.

[14108] The maxims on which the obligation of national religion, in its true and scriptural idea, seems to repose, may be stated as follows:—

First.—All rulers, to whom the gospel has been sent, are bound to embrace it with all their heart, and to submit themselves willingly, with all their official power and greatness, to the authority of the Son of God.

Secondly.—Such rulers, whether magistrates, statesmen, or kings, are bound to rule in the fear of God, to avow openly their allegiance to Christ, and to do all to the glory of His name.

Thirdly.—They ought, therefore, to base their laws on the revealed word of God; to execute them with an open appeal to His authority; to own themselves, in their public character, His ministers and servants; and to honour Him with open acts of worship, in confession, prayer, and thanksgiving.

Fourthly.—Their duty, as the ministers of God for good to the people, has a wider range than barely to secure property and life by motives of physical fear. They are bound to promote a wise distribution of wealth, even more than its accumulation, and its virtuous use more than its selfish possession. They ought, in their whole policy, to honour moral excellence above worldly riches; to care for the deep wants of the soul more than for those of the body; and, instead of making worldly abundance their highest aim, to seek, by all means in their power, the true and eternal welfare of their people.

Fifthly.—The visible Church, in its true idea, is a direct appointment of God, to spread the light of Divine truth in the world, and to bring families, states, and kingdoms, with all their various fields of thought and action, into full captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Sixthly.—Hence, wherever that Church has

a home, Christian rulers are bound to become members of its communion, to protect it from malice and outrage, to sanction and promote its labours of love in the instruction of the ignorant, and the conversion of unbelievers, and to give it social facilities for its growth and increase in numbers, purity, and holiness.

Seventhly.—They are, therefore, bound also, in their laws, to recognize its corporate existence, its social worth, and Divine commission; to encourage and, when needful, to regulate the offerings of its members; to help on its efforts for the instruction of the people, and to honour its ordinances and maxims in the whole constitution of the state.—*Rev. T. R. Birks.*

#### XIV. POSITION OF SCHISMATICS.

##### 1 From a High Church standpoint.

[14109] What is the spiritual condition of those Christian people who have separated themselves from the Church? Many of them are good, religious people. They serve God according to their knowledge, and according to the measure of grace which they have received. We would, therefore, speak of them with respect, and in a spirit of the widest Christian charity. But, at the same time, true charity teaches us to "speak the truth in love" (Eph. iv. 15); and therefore we must sorrowfully remember that those of whom we speak are displeasing the Saviour in whom they believe by promoting divisions among Christian people, and separating themselves from His Church. He who prayed for His followers, "that they all may be one" (John xvii. 21), cannot look with favour on those who wilfully "cause divisions." And, again, we know that apart from the Church there can be no sacramental means of grace. There can be . . . no grace, conveyed through ministerial channels, where there are no ministers commissioned by Christ. Hence a Christian, outside the Church, is living in a spiritual desert, refusing the green pastures where the Good Shepherd tends His flock. And lastly, the most solemn thought of all is that those who, wilfully, thus forsake the way of Christ's appointment, and refuse His offers of grace, are in great danger of hereafter finding themselves in the position of him of whom it is said in one of our Lord's parables—"The king saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless!" (Matt. xxii. 12.)—*Rev. D. J. White, M.A.*

##### 2 From a Low Church standpoint.

[14110] I believe the Church of England has been graciously guided by God's mercy to adopt the language of true scriptural moderation, strikingly in contrast with the bold, decided language which it uses when speaking in the doctrinal Articles about things essential to salvation. Let us be satisfied that our own communion is scriptural; but let us never pretend to unchurch all other communions beside our own.—*Bp. Ryle.*

[14111] For my own part I abhor the idea of saying that men like Carey and Rhenius, and Williams, and Campbell, the missionaries, were not real ministers of Jesus Christ. I loathe the idea of handing over the communions to which such men as Matthew Henry, and Doddridge, and Robert Hall, and McCheyne, and Chalmers belonged, to the uncovenanted mercies of God, or saying that such men as these were not really and truly ordained. People dare to talk of their not belonging to the Church Catholic, and of their being guilty of schism! I cannot for a moment hold such views. I would to God that we had many Episcopalians like the men I have named. People may shut them out from what they call the "Catholic Church," but I am firmly persuaded they will not shut them out from the kingdom of God. Surely those whom God hath not excluded, we should take care not to exclude.—*Ibid.*

[14112] Let us not set down men as no Christians, because they do not agree with us in our manner of worshipping God. I speak with special reference to the great body of Protestant Dissenters in England, who hold the leading doctrines of the gospel as set forth at the Reformation. I wish every member of the Church of England to take broad, charitable, and scriptural views of such persons, and to dismiss from his mind the wretched, narrow-minded, bigoted prejudices which are so unhappily common on the subject.—*Ibid.*

[14113] Do the Dissenters love the Lord Jesus Christ? Are they born again of God's Spirit? Are they penitent, believing, holy people? If they are, they will get to heaven, I firmly believe, as certainly as any Episcopalian on earth. . . . We must not forget that "he is the schismatic who causes the schism." We must confess that the Church of England caused much of the schism that has taken place.—*Ibid.*

[14114] Do not fancy that divisions and schisms are unimportant things. This is a great delusion, and one into which many fall, when they find there is no visible Church which can be called the only true Church on earth. All divisions among Christians are an immense evil. All divisions strengthen the hands of infidels, and help the devil. The great maxim of Satan is "divide and conquer."—*Ibid.*

[14115] We may be very sure that union is strength, and we may be no less sure that discipline and uniformity are one great aid to union. I fully admit that separation is justifiable under some circumstances, beyond a question. But it is absurd to say on that account that there is no such thing as schism. I for one cannot say so. Men ought to tolerate much—I say it confidently—men ought to tolerate and put up with much, before they think of separating and dividing, and leaving one church for another. It is a step which nothing but the deliberate teaching of false doctrine can justify.—*Ibid.*

## 2

## THE SACRAMENTS AND ORDINANCES.

## I. HISTORY OF THE WORD SACRAMENT.

[14116] In classical Latin the word "sacramentum" meant—(1) the pecuniary "recognizances" deposited in a sacred place by each of the litigants in a suit at law; and (2) the sacred military oath by which soldiers were bound to allegiance and obedience. This oath was taken upon the "signa militaria," or consecrated "signs" which surmounted each regimental banner. It was probably an association between the sacred signs and the sacred deposits which connected these two senses together under the same word. The early ecclesiastical use of the word had reference most frequently to baptism, doubtless from the idea of enrolling a convert under Christ's banner by a vow of obedience, as the soldier was enrolled by his "sacramentum."—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[14117] St. Cyprian speaks of Christians as being bound together by the "sacramentum unitatis," which is evidently a reference to Holy Communion; and, when writing directly of the Holy Eucharist, he frequently applies the word "sacramentum" to it. By the time of St. Jerome and St. Augustine, the ecclesiastical use of the word in its present sense seems to have become settled.—*Ibid.*

[14118] The ecclesiastical usage of the word sacramentum was influenced by various circumstances. From its etymology it was applied to anything sacred or consecrated. Then to anything which had a sacred or hidden meaning. In this sense it was applied to all religious rites and ceremonies. This brought it into connection with the Greek word *μυστήριον*. Hence in the Vulgate the word is translated "sacramentum," in Eph. i. 9, iii. 9, v. 2; Col. i. 27; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Rev. i. 20, xvii. 7. It was therefore used in the wide sense for any sign which had a secret import. All religious rites and ceremonies, the sign of the cross, anointing with oil, &c., were therefore called sacraments. The signification of the word being so comprehensive, and its usage so lax, it follows that little aid can be derived from these sources in fixing its meaning in Christian theology. The only safe and satisfactory manner, therefore, of arriving at that meaning is to take those ordinances which by common consent are admitted to be sacraments, and, by analyzing them, to determine what are their essential elements or characteristics.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

## II. NATURE OF THE SACRAMENTS.

The sacraments are "outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace."

[14119] A sacrament is an act in which spiri



tual blessings are at once represented by and conferred through some visible thing, according to a positive institution of God, to those who receive it with faith. The annexing of spiritual blessings to a visible symbol tends to fix the eye of faith on the historical character of our religion, and thus we are saved from the cloudy abstractions of a so-called absolute religion. But the effect is not magical, but moral; the sacraments confer the grace of God, they do not contain it; they are channels, not fountains. Nor are they the only channels. The effects of the incarnation are perceived whenever faith awakens to the need of it and to its reality.—*Abp. Thomson.*

[14120] The sacraments are symbolical transactions. Symbolism meets a want of human nature. Puritanism, which is acquainted only with bare walls, mistakes human nature. Truth delights in taking a visible form, and the Word clothes itself in a shape which may strike the senses. Our whole life is interwoven with symbolism. The thoughts of our minds, the inclinations of our hearts, all seek a symbolical expression. And why should not those of our religious life?—*Luthardt.*

[14121] When we fold our hands, when we bow or raise our heads, when we bend our knees—what are these but symbolical actions, sensible expressions of that which is not sensible? We have made the cross the universal symbol of Christendom. Every picture of our Saviour is a symbol. Nay, there is symbolism in all art, for art never fully rises to its subjects. . . . It strives, indeed, to become the perfect expression of its subject, but is ever forced to confess that it is far from attaining its end. Never will a painter succeed in adequately depicting the grace and truth that shone in the countenance of Jesus Christ. All true art contains an element of symbolism. It is by this very feature that it becomes a guide to lead us out of this visible into the invisible world.—*Ibid.*

[14122] The sacraments and symbols, if they be considered in their own nature, are just such as they seem, water, and bread, and wine; they retain the names proper to their own natures: but because they are made to be signs of a secret mystery, and water is the symbol of purification of the soul from sin, and bread and wine of Christ's body and blood, therefore the symbols and sacraments receive the names of what themselves do sign; they are the body, and they are the blood of Christ: they are metonymically such. But because, yet further, they are instruments of grace in the hands of God, and by these His Holy Spirit changes our hearts and translates us into a Divine nature, therefore the whole work is attributed to them by a synecdoche; that is, they do, in their manner, the work for which God ordained them, and they are placed there for our sakes, and speak God's language in our accent, and they appear in the

outside: we receive the benefit of their ministry, and God receives the glory.—*Bp. Jeremy Taylor's Worthily Communicant.*

[14123] He that supposeth to make Christ his, and all Christ's merits, by the receiving of the outward sign and sacrament, and bringeth not Christ in his heart to the sacrament, he may make himself assured rather of the devil and eternal death, as Judas and Cain did (Matt. xxvi.; Gen. iv.). For the sacrament maketh not the union, peace and concord between God and us, but it ratifieth, stablisheth, and confirmeth the love and peace that is between God and us for His promise's sake.—*Bp. Hooper.*

[14124] They are not rites or forms effectual by way of *opus operatum*, as distinguished from the *opus operans* of the elder covenant—but dependent on moral conditions, in the presence of which Almighty God bestows a grace on the receiver which is represented by the outward sign—and conveyed with it, but not in it. The sign and thing signified, therefore, may, and do, exist separately—the thing may exist, in special cases, without the rite—the rite is constantly administered and received without the thing. Thus they do not originate or convey those conditions of the soul on which salvation depends, though they increase and perfect them—but both presuppose them—both demand repentance and that vital faith, which will lead us, as a necessary consequence, to obey God's commandments, and which vivifies the outward rites which He has ordained as instruments of further spiritual graces. Nor do they communicate Christ to the soul in any other manner or any other presence than that by which He reveals Himself in other acts of faith, by which He dwells in the heart, and makes the Christian soul His temple—not by corporeal presence, but vital action.—*J. Garbett, M.A.*

### III. THEIR VALUE AND EFFICACY.

When duly administered and faithfully received.

[14125] The cleansing power of water, the nutritious property of bread, and the exhilarating quality of wine, are employed to instruct us through other avenues to the mind than the ears alone can supply; and thus we learn concerning the washing of regeneration, the spiritual nourishment which the bread of life supplies, and the refreshing influence which flows from the blood of Christ.—*T. A. G. Bal-four, M.D.*

[14126] There is much water in the well or spring-head; it comes to us in leaden pipes or wooden troughs. Now what is the leaden pipe or wooden trough more than another? Nothing at all; it is the water in the pipe or trough that makes them esteemed above others. It is true they can do more than others; if you look upon them in their use, *i.e.*, to convey the water unto us, then they are more excellent than all others

whatsoever. So in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, there is water in the one, and bread and wine in the other: yet what is this water, this bread and wine, more than any other? Are not they the same we have at home? Yea; oh, but if we look upon them as ordained of God to convey His mercies into our hearts, to seal unto our souls the remission of sins, &c., and that God hath set them aside to that end and purpose, then they are more excellent than any other water, bread, or wine possibly can be.—*Spencer*.

[14127] Baptism and the Lord's Supper have both indispensable value—(1) as the unequivocal expression of the chief truths of Christianity, which, even if they were nowhere again announced in words, would here be always read in symbolical characters; (2) as a striking symbol of the spirit of true Christianity, as a spirit of faith and love, of purity and holiness; (3) as a constant standard of union for the Christianity now so lamentably divided, which is always a partaker of one baptism, one bread, and one cup; and (4) as a powerful means of strengthening that faith which has already been produced in a more or less advanced degree by the preaching of the Word.—*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*

#### IV. THEIR NECESSITY.

No Church can be in a healthy spiritual condition if it gives other than a due prominence to Christ's ordinances.

[14128] Deprive the Church of her frequent ordinances, and she will resemble a magnificent and extensive estate loaded with the most abundant crops, but without any barns standing on it, where the produce may be gathered in. Here, however fertile the soil, or however the finest skill in agriculture may be brought into play, all must fall into ruin and loss. So, though the Church is rich in promises, in the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and in her continual Intercessor, yet without her frequent means of grace all her spiritual treasures would remain unappropriated, and the members of her body would be starved and perish in the midst of plenty.—*Salter*.

[14129] When old Barzillai had lost his taste and hearing, he cared not for David's feasts and merriment; so there are many who, having lost their spiritual taste and hearing, care not for gospel ordinances. Under a pretence of living above ordinances, they live below ordinances; yea, they scorn, vilify, and condemn Christ's ordinances, that are more worth than heaven and earth.—*T. Brooks*.

[14130] He that will meet the king must wait on him in his walks. Christ's ordinances are Christ's walks; and he that would see the beauty of Christ, and taste of the sweetness of Christ, and be ravished with the love of Christ, must wait at wisdom's door, must attend Christ

in His own appointments and institutions. That comfort and assurance that flows not in through the golden pipes of the sanctuary will not better the soul, nor long abide with the soul; it will be as the dew of the morning and as the flower of the field.—*Ibid.*

[14131] They that have not wings to mount must use ladders to climb.—*Calvin*.

[14132] It is by the institutions of Christ that the Church becomes visible or historical; by these, moreover, the connection is organically maintained between the Church and her glorified Saviour, so that the workings of the Spirit in the fellowship may be experienced as the workings of Christ. By means of these institutions Christ continually abides as the principle of the Church's doctrine and worship; He keeps her in the true and saving doctrine by the Divine Word, which He has entrusted to her; He keeps her in the true worship by the holy ordinances and acts which He has appointed.—*Bp. Martensen*.

[14133] Let respect be had to the duty which every communicant undertakes, and we may well determine concerning the use of sacraments, that they serve as bonds of obedience to God, strict obligations to the mutual exercise of Christian charity, provocations to godliness, preservation from sin, and memorials of the principal benefits of Christ. Respect the time of their institution, and it thereby appears that God has annexed them for ever unto the New Testament, as other rites were before with the old. Regard the weakness which is in us, and they are warrants for the more security of our belief. Compare the receivers of them with such as receive them not—and sacraments are marks of distinction of God's own from strangers, so that in all these respects they are found to be most necessary. But their chiefest force and virtue consists not herein so much as in that they are heavenly ceremonies, which God has sanctified and ordained to be administered in His Church.—*Hooker*.

[14134] A sacrament is more than a bare matter of form; as in the Old Testament, circumcision and propitiatory sacrifices were things of a different nature and order from all the other ritual precepts concerning their cleansings, the distinctions of days, places, and meats. By circumcision they received the seal of the covenant, and were brought under the obligation of the whole law; they were made by it debtors to it; and when by their sins they had provoked God's wrath, they were reconciled to Him by their sacrifices, with which atonement was made, and so their sins were forgiven them; the nature and end of those was, to be federal acts, in the offering of which the Jews kept to their part of the covenant, and in the accepting of which God maintained it on His part; so we see a plain difference between these and a mere rite, which, though com-

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[THE SACRAMENTS AND ORDINANCES.]

manded, yet must pass only for the badge of a profession, as the doing of it is an act of obedience to a Divine law. Now, in the new dispensation, though our Saviour has eased us of that *law of ordinances*, that *grievous yoke*, and those *beggarly elements*, which were laid upon the Jews; yet since we are still in the body subject to our senses, and to sensible things, He has appointed some federal actions to be both the visible stipulations and professions of our Christianity, and the conveyancers to us of the blessings of the gospel. — *Bp. Burnet*.

[14135] Every explanation of the workings of grace, which denies their living connection with the means of grace, leads to a false subjectivity; to mysticism, Quakerism, and the like; every theory of the means of grace, which separates them from a life-giving connection with the workings of grace, leads to a false objectivity, to a literalness of faith, *opus operatum*, such as is in various ways manifest in Catholicism. The true doctrine of the Church rests upon the organic reciprocity of both the means and the operations of grace; and these, though distinguished here for the sake of argument, are in life and activity indissolubly connected. — *Bp. Martensen*.

## V. THEIR TWO DISTINCT OFFICES.

[14136] The sacraments combine in themselves two distinct offices, which for convenience may be called the suggestive or effective and the representative. By the suggestive or effective office of the sacraments is meant, that they set before the eyes of each member of the Christian communion certain facts, truths, motives, and obligations, and so effect a certain condition in him, become *efficacia signa gratie*. By the representative is meant, that each member of the congregation declares to the congregation his recognition of the truths, his acknowledgment of the motives, and his submission to the obligations. In the sacrament of baptism the suggestive or effective office appears almost exclusively; in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper the two offices effective and representative are more evidently combined. — *H. B. Wilson, B.D.*

## VI. THEIR POSITION IN THE ECONOMY OF GRACE.

### 1 From a Low Church standpoint.

*Important, but secondary.*

[14137] It was the practice of our Lord Himself to employ His assistants in the administration of baptism. Other apostles pursued a similar course. The practice rested, in fact, on the secondary place which in the gospel all rites and outward ordinances must hold in comparison of evangelism or the proclamation of Christ's message. Not that in their own

secondary place the holy sacraments should be disparaged. Paul on proper occasions could use strong enough and lofty enough language respecting baptism. Still the work for which he had been made an apostle or messenger of Christ was to carry a message, to speak a word of life to sinners; not to administer any formal rites, however significant or however solemn. "Christ made an apostle of me, not to baptize, but to evangelize." — *J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

[14138] I believe, with every feeling of respect for Quakers and Plymouth Brethren, that no one who neglected these two sacraments would have been regarded as a Christian by St. Paul and St. Peter, St. James and St. John. There is no getting over the fact that baptism and the Lord's Supper were ordained by Christ Himself as means of grace, and we cannot doubt He meant them to be reverently and duly used. — *Bp. Kyle*.

[14139] A man who preferred to worship God for many years without ever receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a man, I am firmly persuaded, that would not have been thought in a right state in the days of the apostles. But, at the same time, let us beware of any worship in which a disproportionate honour is given to any one ordinance to the neglect of another. — *Ibid.*

### 2 From a High Church standpoint.

*Indispensable and supreme.*

[14140] All means of grace may be divided into two classes, because some of them are very liable to corruption as they are employed or ministered by man, while others depend for their efficacy only on the power of God, although they may fail in their effects because neglected or misused. *Inferior means of grace* are those which greatly depend for their power on man, such as preaching, prayer, and Bible reading. . . . *Superior means of grace* are those which depend for their power on God only, and under this head are to be included the sacramental means of grace which have been provided by Christ, and are dispensed by Him to the ministers of the Church. — *Rev. D. J. White, M.A.*

[14141] There are very many who are frequent hearers of sermons, who do not neglect to pray, and are diligent readers of the Bible; but they persistently refuse to avail themselves of the grace which they might receive through sacramental channels, and especially through the sacrament of Holy Communion. One result of this is that their efforts to live a holy life, and to please God, are crippled and thwarted. They do not attain to a state of spiritual vigour because they *starve their souls*. They may have a good *will* to serve God well, but they often fail to do so because they do not seek for strength where it can most surely be found. Another very serious consideration is that by following this course we rely upon *man*, when we should trust more entirely to God.



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If we neglect the sacraments we are *putting man in the place of God*. We are relying upon means of grace which are so often corrupted by man, instead of seeking spiritual health and safety in those means which depend only on the power of God.—*Ibid.*

#### VII. PREPARATION FOR THEIR RECEPTION.

[1412] Many press upon Christ in outward ordinances, but believers touch Him. It is by faith that He is touched so as to have virtue from Him (Lake viii. 45, 46).—*St. Ambrose (Bishop of Milan)*.

[1413] As the poor embossed deer that is closely pursued faints and melts with the heat of the chase, and hasteth to the known river where it was wont to quench its thirst, to find both safety and refreshment there; so doth the holy, amorous soul reach and breathe after God; he thirsteth after the water-brooks—the streams of His ordinances, wherein God doth pour out His grace and Spirit, to refresh the longing desires of this holy impatience.—*Bp. Hopkins*.

[1414] There are two essential parts of preparation for every religious service: that of the heart and that of the mind. If the heart be not right with God, and honestly set to please Him, all illumination of the mind will but increase our condemnation. But even when the heart is right our services must degenerate into superstition unless the mind have been informed about their nature, their principles, and their effects.—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

#### VIII. RELATION OF THE TWO SACRAMENTS INSTITUTED BY CHRIST TO OTHER HOLY ORDINANCES.

[1415] Other ordinances bear the relation to baptism and the Lord's Supper of the derived to the original, as subservient accessories to the central point, and they possess neither the independent nor the all-embracing import that baptism and the Lord's Supper possess. Confirmation springs out of baptism, and absolution recovers its true significance from the Holy Communion. Marriage and orders concern only particular relations of life and offices; while in baptism and the Lord's Supper there is neither male nor female, neither laic nor priest, but the new man in Christ Jesus.—*Bp. Martineau*.

[1416] There is this essential difference between the sacraments and other holy ordinances. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which correspond respectively to the regeneration and sanctification of the new man, according to Christ's own appointment, are absolutely necessary for the existence of the Church, and are fundamental presuppositions or conditions of the Church's development, her union with the Lord depending upon them; whereas those other five are only products of this development.—*Ibid.*

#### IX. THE SACRAMENTAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

##### 1 As to the number of the Sacraments.

[1417] There seems to have been no dispute in the Church as to the number of the sacraments, or any attempts to define and settle their number, until after the twelfth century. The discussion of this subject commenced among the schoolmen, and was settled, so far as the authority of one man could settle it, by Peter Lombard, in his four books of sentences. The principal reason why he decided upon seven sacraments, rather than a less or greater number, was that seven is a *sacred* number, and of course the sacraments must be presumed to be seven. In this decision, as in almost everything else, he was followed by the principal doctors of the Romish Church; but the sacraments were not authoritatively determined to be seven until the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century.—*Enoch Pond, D.D.*

[1418] Bellarmine admits, as, indeed, is undeniable, that the ancients called many things sacraments besides the seven. Thus the Council of Trent, if its decrees are to be strictly construed, lays under its ban the whole Catholic Church of the first four or five centuries, by whose traditions and authority it professes to be governed. So the bull of Pius IV. requires every priest on his ordination to profess that there are, truly and properly, seven sacraments. And what may seem unaccountable minuteness and precision, the Church of Rome, not admitting her seven sacraments to be of equal importance, holds in *terrorem* a curse over all who mistake their comparative value. The sacraments ordained by the Council of Trent are, besides baptism and the Eucharist, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction.—*Dr. Halley*.

##### 2 As to their operation and effects.

[1419] According to the doctrine of the Church of Rome, the sacraments contain the grace they signify, and confer grace, *ex opere operato*, by the work itself, upon such as do not put an obstruction by mortal sin. "For these sensible and natural things," it is declared, "work by the almighty power of God in the sacraments what they could not do by their own power." Nor is any more necessary to this effect, than that the priests, "who make and consecrate the sacraments, have an *intention* of doing what the Church doth, and doth intend to do." According, therefore, to this doctrine the matter of the sacrament derives from the action of the priest, in pronouncing certain words, a Divine virtue, provided it be the intention of the priest to give to that matter such a Divine virtue, and this grace is conveyed to the soul of every person who receives it. Nor is it required of the person receiving a sacrament that he should exercise any good dis-

position, or possess faith ; for such is conceived to be the *physical virtue* of a sacrament, that, except when opposed by the obstacle of a mortal sin, the act of receiving it is alone sufficient for the experience of its efficacy. This is so capital an article of faith with the Romish Church, that the Council of Trent anathematizes all who deny that grace is not conferred by the sacraments from the act itself of receiving them, and affirm that faith only in the Divine promises is sufficient to the obtaining of grace.—*Bp. Burnet*.

[14150] The Romish Church argues the superiority of the sacraments of the New Testament to those of the Old thus : the latter were effectual only *ex opere operantis*, from the piety and faith of the persons receiving them, whilst the former confer grace *ex opere operato*, from their own intrinsic virtue, and an immediate physical influence upon the mind of the receiver. The first great objection to this statement is, that it has even no pretence of authority from Scripture, and grounds itself wholly upon the alleged traditions of the Church of Rome, which, in fact, are just what successive inventors of superstitious practices have thought proper to make them. The second is, that it is decidedly anti-scriptural ; for as the only true notion of a sacrament is that it is the sign and seal of a covenant, and as the saving benefits of the covenant of grace are made expressly to depend upon a true faith, the condition of grace being made by the Church of Rome the act of receiving a sacrament independent of true faith, she impudently rejects the great condition of salvation as laid down in God's Word, and sets up in its place another of an opposite kind by mere human authority. The third is, that it debases an ordinance of God from a rational service into a mere charm, disconnected with every mental exercise, and working its effect physically, and not morally. The fourth is its licentious tendency ; for as a very large class of sins is by the Romish Church allowed to be venial, and nothing but a mortal sin can prevent the recipient of the sacrament from receiving the grace of God ; men may live in the practice of all these venial offences, and consequently in an unrenewed habit of soul, and yet be assured of the Divine favour, and of eternal salvation ; thus again boldly contradicting the whole tenor of the New Testament. Finally, whatever privileges the sacraments are designed to confer, all of them are made by this doctrine to depend, not upon the state of the receiver's mind, but upon the "intention" of the administrator, who, if not intending to impart the physical virtue to the elements, renders the sacrament of no avail to the recipient, although he performs all the external acts of the ceremony.—*Ibid.*

#### X. EVANGELICAL AND TRACTARIAN VIEWS.

[14151] As the Evangelical Churches lay down two main principles, justification by faith alone, and the sole authority of Holy Writ, so there

are two leading principles in Tractarianism, justification by the sacraments alone, and the sole authority of the Church. In the Evangelical Churches the supreme importance is attached to the subjective grasp of the objective salvation by means of faith ; in Tractarianism the supreme importance is attached to the objective communication of salvation by means of the sacraments. In the former case, the assurance of salvation rests upon the inward testimony of the Spirit ; in the latter, upon the external witness of the Church as to the due administration of the sacraments. There, the seal is the Holy Ghost ; here, the apostolical succession.—*Alfred Cave*.

### 3

#### HOLY BAPTISM.

##### I. THEOLOGICAL MEANING OF THE WORD

[14152] The word βαπτίζω, as a religious term, means neither dip nor sprinkle, immerse nor pour—nor any other external action in applying a fluid to the body, or the body to a fluid—nor any action which is limited to one mode of performance. But as a religious term it means at all times, to purify, or cleanse—words of a meaning so general as not to be confined to any mode, or agent, or means, or object, whether material or spiritual, but to leave the widest scope for the question as to the mode—so that in this usage it is in every respect a perfect synonym of the word καθαρίζω.—*E. Beecher, D.D.*

##### II. DEFINITION AND NATURE OF THE SACRAMENT.

##### 1. "A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness."

[14153] Baptism is a holy symbolical act, in the name, and by the command, of the glorified Lord of the Church, by which every one who receives it in faith is set apart from the unbelieving world, is received into the Christian communion, is assured of the saving promises of the gospel respecting forgiveness of and purifying from sin, and is pledged to a new life in holiness and brotherly love.—*J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*

[14154] The central point of the revelation of redemption is the atonement on the cross, the forgiveness of sins. It is this which is signified in baptism. Water is the means of purification, and the act of washing the act of purification. Baptism signifies purification from sin—not only that we are to cleanse ourselves, but that God will cleanse us.—*Luthardt*.

[14155] A Christian life is a life of communion with God. The obstacle to this communion is the guilt of sin. Our first, our chief want is the forgiveness of sin. Baptism is the sacrament of the cleansing of the conscience from guilt. But it is this for the purpose of uniting us with God.

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The bond of our communion with God is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Reconciliation unites Himself with the water of purification, and baptism is the covenant of a good conscience with God.—*Ibid.*

[14156] Baptism is an ordinance of great simplicity. The outward part or sign is water, administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, or in the name of Christ. The inward part or thing signified is that washing in the blood of Christ, and inward cleansing of the heart by the Holy Ghost, without which no one can be saved. The 27th Article of the Church of England says rightly, "Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth.—*Bp. Ryle.*

## 2 The title of admission into the Church of Christ.

[14157] Baptism is the sacrament of reception. Its external form was not entirely new. But Christ introduced new matter into this form, viz., that confession of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which was henceforth to be combined with this rite. Baptism was to be reception into communion with the Triune God, and into participation in His redemption.—*Lutherardt.*

[14158] Baptism is an ordinance appointed by our Lord Jesus Christ for the continual admission of fresh members into His visible Church. In the army every new soldier is formally added to the muster roll of his regiment. In a school every new scholar is formally entered on the books of the school. And every Christian begins his Church membership by being baptized.—*Bp. Ryle.*

## III. ITS INSTITUTION BY CHRIST.

### 1 Jewish origin of the rite, and the peculiar appropriateness of its Christian application.

[14159] Baptism was founded on the Oriental custom, which, both in ancient and modern times, regards ablution at once as a means of health and a sign of purity. Here, as elsewhere, the Founder of Christianity chose rather to sanctify and elevate what already existed than to create and invent a new form for Himself. Baptism is the oldest ceremonial ordinance that Christianity possesses; it is the only one which is inherited from Judaism. It is thus interesting as the only ordinance of the Christian Church which equally belonged to the merciful Jesus and the austere John.—*Dean Stanley.*

[14160] Out of all the manifold religious practices of the ancient law—sacrifices, offerings, tabernacle, temple, sacred vestments, &c.—Christ chose this alone; the most homely, the most universal, the most innocent of all. He might have continued the strange painful rite of

circumcision, but He, or at least His apostles, rejected it altogether. He might have chosen some elaborate ceremonial like the initiation into the old mysteries, instead of which He chose what every one could understand. He took what, at least in Eastern and Southern countries, was the most delightful, the most ordinary, the most salutary of several observances.—*Ibid.*

[14161] By choosing water, and the use of the bath, He indicated our chief characteristic of the Christian religion. Whatever else the Christian was to be, baptism—the use of water—showed that he was to be clean and pure, in body, soul, and spirit; clean even in body. Cleanliness is a duty which some of the monastic communities of Christendom have despised, and some have even treated as a crime. But such was not the mind of Him who chose the washing with water for the prime ordinance of His followers. "Wash and be clean" was the prophet's admonition of old to the Syrian whom he sent to bathe in the river Jordan. It was the text of the one only sermon by which a well-known geologist of this country was known to his generation. "Cleanliness next to godliness" was the maxim of the great religious prophet of England in the last century, John Wesley.—*Ibid.*

[14162] Every time that we see the drops of water poured over the face in baptism, they are signs to us of the cleanly habits which our Master prized when He founded the rite of baptism, and when, by His own baptism in the sweet soft stream of the rapid Jordan, He blessed the element of water for use as the best and choicest of God's natural gifts to man in his thirsty, weary, wayworn passage through the dust and heat of the world. But the cleanness of the body was in this ordinance meant to indicate yet more strongly the perfect cleanness, the unsullied purity of the soul; or, as the English Baptismal Service quaintly expresses it, the mystical washing away of sin—that is, the washing, cleansing process that effaces the dark spots of selfishness and passion in the human character, in which, by nature and by habit, they have been so deeply ingrained. "Associate the idea of sin with the idea of dirt" was a homely maxim of Keble. It indicates also that as the Christian heart must be bathed in an atmosphere of purity, so the Christian mind must be bathed in an atmosphere of truth, of love of truth, of perfect truthfulness, of transparent veracity and sincerity. What filthy, indecent talk or action is to the heart and affections, that a lie however white, a fraud however pious, is to the mind and conscience. Sir Isaac Newton is said by his friends to have had the whitest soul that they ever knew. That is the likeness of a truly Christian soul as indicated by the old baptismal washing: the whiteness of purity, the cleanness and transparency of truth.—*Ibid.*

[14163] No ceremony could be better adapted to Christ's purpose than this. It was already



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in use, and had acquired a meaning and associations which were universally understood. By calling upon all alike, Jews as well as Gentiles, to submit to it, Christ would intimate that He did not merely revive the old theocracy, but instituted a new one, so that the children of Abraham themselves, members of a theocracy from their birth, had a past to wash away and a new life to begin, not less than the unsanctified Gentile. And at the same time, being publicly performed, it would serve as well as any other rite to test the loyalty of the new recruit and his readiness to be known by his Master's name.—*Ecce Homo*.

#### IV. ITS RELATION TO THE CIRCUMCISION OF THE OLDER COVENANT.

[14164] Circumcision was the token of the covenant betwixt God and the children of Abraham according to the flesh; and baptism is the token of the covenant betwixt God and the children of Abraham according to the Spirit. Circumcision, in that it was the token of the old covenant, admitted those who were circumcised into all the privileges and immunities belonging to that covenant; and baptism, in that it is the token of the new covenant, invests those who are baptized with all the privileges and immunities belonging to the new, or, to sum these up in one word, it incorporates them as living members into Christ's body.—*C. A. Heurley, D.D.*

[14165] What circumcision was for the children of Israel, baptism is, though in a far higher sense, for Christians (Col. ii. 11, 12), a pledge that the God of the community is the God of the individual, that the Redeemer of the Church will be the Redeemer of each member.—*Ep. Martensen*.

#### V. ITS PRE-CHRISTIAN ASPECT.

##### 1. Supposed baptism of Jewish proselytes.

[14166] Many of the more learned inquirers into Biblical antiquities, including Duxtorf, Lightfoot, Selden, Schöttgen, Wall, &c., have been of opinion that the Jews were in the habit of admitting proselytes to the Jewish faith by an ordinance of baptism accompanying the rite of circumcision. Wall speaks of it as a kind of settled point in his time. Later and more discriminating investigations, however, have shown this view to be untenable. It may almost, indeed, be held fatal to it, that both Philo and Josephus never once allude to any such initiatory baptismal rite; in Josephus, the admission of strangers is expressly said to have been by circumcision and sacrifice, and there is the like silence respecting baptism in the apocryphal writings, in the Targums of Onkelos and of Jonathan. It were impossible to account for such general silence if the practice had really existed at the time.—*Rev. James Hamilton, D.D.*

[14167] There is no evidence of a Jewish proselyte baptism till about the fourth century of the Christian era, when it does appear as a custom already in use, but one not probably introduced till the end of the third century; and the statements of Rabbinical writers respecting its pre-Christian, and even Mosaic institution, are mere assertions without proof.—*Ibid.*

##### 2. The baptism of John.

###### (1) *Its nature.*

[14168] John's baptism was evidently in the strictest sense an initiatory rite, dispensed by John to those who submitted themselves to his instructions, and entered into his design—dispensed once for all, and forming so characteristic a feature in his mission, that he is represented as coming into all the region about Jordan “preaching the baptism of repentance.” The singularity of this course was among the things which attracted notice and aroused the general expectation concerning him, as divinely commissioned or claiming to originate a new phase of things in the history of God's dealings with men.—*Ibid.*

[14169] “Why baptizest thou then,” asked the emissaries of the Pharisees of John, “if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet?” clearly implying that if he had been any one of these, in the sense understood by them, they would have found in the circumstance an explanation of his baptismal institution, while nothing less, in their view, could properly account for it. His baptism, therefore, struck them as a novelty, yet a novelty not unlikely to appear in connection with such missions and movements as were then commonly anticipated. There had been such a prevailing use of water in the lustrations of the old covenant, and men's ideas had been so familiarized to it as indicative of a change to the better, that it seemed in their apprehensions perfectly natural, for one whose mission might form the commencement of a new era in the Church, to inaugurate the change by a public baptism.—*Ibid.*

[14170] It is clear that John felt himself commissioned not merely to preach the doctrine, but also to institute and dispense the baptism of repentance. The constancy of his practice indicates this, and an expression that occurs in one of his addresses plainly declares it: “He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me,” &c. (John i. 33). But this mission of John to baptize cannot, of course, be separated from his office of preaching; the latter properly went before the other, and found in the baptism its public seal and embodiment. . . . Hence his baptism, which embodied the aim and result of his preaching, is said to have been “unto repentance,” and “unto remission of sins.” Hence also, as the necessary consequence of a high moral aim, coupled with his being divinely commissioned to prosecute it, his preaching could not be a mere call from man to repent, nor his baptism a mere administration of water.—*Ibid.*

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(2) *Its connection with the work of Christ.*

[14171] When coming to receive the baptism of John, Christ declared submission to the ordinance to be a part of that righteousness which must all be fulfilled by Him; an ordinance, therefore, of heaven, that carried, when entered into aright, communion with the Spirit, as well as obedience to the will of the Father. Accordingly it was precisely at that moment of His history that the Spirit descended in visible form and plenitude of grace upon the Saviour; and it is a principle pervading the whole economy of the Divine kingdom that there was nothing absolutely singular in the history of Jesus—that what He found in its fulness and perfection others may also in measure obtain, and after the manner that He Himself did.—*Ibid.*

[14172] Christ Himself, as if purposely to show how John's baptism stood connected with the grace of God, and what benefits in its own time and place it was fitted to yield, for a season prosecuted the work of John's baptism as well as of John's preaching. "When He heard that John was cast into prison He departed into Galilee, and began to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"—that is to say, He took up John's word, when John could no longer himself proclaim it, making His own agency, in the first instance, a continuation of John's.—*Ibid.*

[14173] That Christ should, even for a time, have identified His ministry with John's preaching and baptism, was a convincing proof of the close connection between John's agency and His own.—*Ibid.*

(3) *Its distinction from the baptism of Christ.*

[14174] On account of the vast difference between the two baptisms, John expresses it by way of contrast—his a baptism with water, Christ's a baptism with the Spirit, precisely as the Lord Himself said of things under the old dispensation, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," and again, under the new, "I am come not to send peace on the earth, but a sword."—*Ibid.*

[14175] The Baptist intimates that there was an essential difference between his own baptism and that of Christ. John baptized with water unto repentance, but Christ should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Matt. iii. 11). Thus the one baptism was figurative, signifying by the purifying properties of water the need of repentance and of a renewal of heart and life; the other was the appointed means for communicating the gift of the Holy Ghost and its regenerating influences; the one a baptism by water, which can only cleanse outwardly; the other a baptism by the Holy Ghost, which, like fire, burns up the corruptions of a sin-defiled nature, and thoroughly cleanses the inner man.—*Edwin's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[14176] In John's baptism, the sin-stricken multitudes were warned, from motives most holy and impressive, of the duty of repentance; whilst

in Christ's baptism the gift of the Holy Spirit was imparted to those who had already repented of sin, and cleansed them from its guilt and pollution.—*Ibid.*

[14177] We are ignorant of the *mode* of John's administration of baptism, and only know that it must have differed essentially from Christian baptism, since some baptized by him, it is said, knew not whether there be any Holy Ghost (Acts xix. 3).—*Ibid.*

## VI. ITS SUBJECTS.

## Infants.

(1) *Inferences and arguments drawn from Scripture supporting the right of infants to the blessings of this sacrament.*

a. The extreme probability of baptism being administered to infants in the apostolic age.

[14178] If the baptism of the infant children of believers was not practised by the apostles and by the primitive Churches, when and where did the practice commence? To this question the Baptist writers can give no answer. It is an innovation, according to them, not upon the *circumstances* of a sacrament, but upon its *essential principle*; and yet its introduction produced no struggle; was never noticed by any general or provincial council, and excited no controversy! This itself is strong presumptive proof of its *early antiquity*.—*R. Watson.*

[14179] Tertullian, the only ancient writer who opposed infant baptism, who lived late in the second century, amidst all his arguments against this practice, never ventures upon one which would have been most to his purpose, and which might most forcibly have been urged had not baptism been administered to infants by the apostles and their immediate successors. That argument would have been the novelty of the practice, which he never asserts, and which, as he lived so early, he might have proved, had he had any ground for it. Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, in the second century, and Origen in the beginning of the third, expressly mention infant baptism as the practice of their times, and by the latter this is assigned to apostolical injunction.—*Ibid.*

[14180] That a practice which can be traced up to the very first ages of the Church, and has been till within very modern times its uncontradicted practice, should have a lower authority than apostolic usage and appointment, may be pronounced impossible. It is not like one of those trifling, though somewhat superstitious, additions which even in very early times began to be made to the sacraments; on the contrary, it involves a principle so important as to alter the very nature of the sacrament itself. For if personal faith be an essential requisite of baptism in all cases; if baptism be a visible declaration of this, and is vicious without it; then infant baptism was an innovation of so serious a nature, that it must have attracted attention, and pro-

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voked controversy, which would have led, if not to the suppression of the error, yet to a diversity of practice in the ancient churches, which in point of fact did not exist, Tertullian himself allowing infant baptism in extreme cases.—*Ibid.*

[14181] As to the Acts of the Apostles, the events narrated there did not require the express mention of the baptism of infants as an act separate from the baptism of adults. That which called for the administration of baptism at that period, as now, when the gospel is preached in a heathen land, was the believing of adult persons, not the case of persons already believing, bringing their children for baptism.—*Ibid.*

[14182] On the supposition that baptism was administered to the children of parents who believed, at the same time as themselves, and in consequence of their believing, it may be asked how the fact could be more naturally expressed, when it was not intended to speak of infant baptism doctrinally or distinctly, than that such an one was baptized, "and all his house;" just as a similar fact would be distinctly recorded by a modern missionary writing to a Church at home practising infant baptism, and having no controversy on the subject in his eye, by saying that he baptized such a heathen, at such a place, with all his *family*. For, without going into any criticism on the Greek term rendered *house*, it cannot be denied that, like the old English word employed in our translation, and also like the word *family*, it must be understood to comprehend either the children only, to the exclusion of the domestics, or both.—*Ibid.*

[14183] True, it cannot be proved that there were children in the households baptized by the apostles, but it would be at least strange if this were never the case; and absolutely inconceivable that, if so, the parents should only have asked for baptism for themselves, and not, at the same time, for their offspring. If they really believed that there was salvation in none other, and that the day of the Lord was already at hand, everything about them must force them to desire for their own that salvation which they had received for themselves, and could not expect from any other source. We do not find any trace of the apostles having administered holy baptism to adults whose parents were already Christians; thus these could not have existed at all, or they must have been already baptized as children.—*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*

δ. The fact that Jewish infants were admitted to the kindred rite of circumcision.

[14184] It cannot reasonably be imagined that the apostles, who had all of them been bred up in the Jewish religion, which constantly, and by virtue of a Divine precept and institution, admitted infants into that Church and to the benefits of that covenant by the rite of circumcision, and likewise the infants of proselytes by baptism—I

say no man can reasonably imagine that the apostles could understand our Saviour as intending to exclude the children of Christians out of the Christian Church, and to debar them of the benefits of the new covenant of the gospel—the children of Christians being every whit as capable of being taken into this new covenant, and of partaking of the benefits of it, as children of the Jews were of being admitted into the old, unless we will suppose (which at first sight seems very harsh and unreasonable) that by the terms of the Christian religion children are in a much worse condition than the children of the Jews were under the law.—*Abb. Tillotson.*

[14185] Nothing less than an express prohibition from our Saviour, and an exception of children from baptism, can be thought sufficient to deprive the children of Christians of any privilege of which the Jewish were capable. For the plain meaning of the commission to the apostles is, to go and proselyte all nations to the Christian religion, and to admit them solemnly into it by baptism, as the Jews were wont to proselyte men to their religion by circumcision and baptism; by which rites also they took in the children of the proselytes, upon promise that when they came to years they should continue in that religion. And if this was our Saviour's meaning, the apostles had no reason, from the tenor of their commission, to understand that the children of Christian proselytes were any more excluded than the children of proselytes to the Jewish religion, unless our Saviour had expressly excepted them; for it is a favourable case, and in a matter of privilege, and therefore ought not to be determined to debar children of it, upon any obscure consequence from a text, which it is certain was never so understood by the Christian Church for 1,500 years together.—*Ibid.*

[14186] Although by express terms we be not commanded to baptize young children, yet we believe they are to be baptized, and that for these, among other reasons: the grace of God is universal, and pertaineth unto all; therefore the sign or seal of grace is universal, and belongeth unto all, so well young as old. Baptism is unto us as circumcision was unto the Jews: but the infants of the Jews were circumcised; therefore the children of Christians are to be baptized. Children belong unto the kingdom of heaven, and are in the covenant; therefore the sign of the covenant is not to be denied them. Christ gave in commandment that all should be baptized; therefore young children are not to be exempted. Christ hath shed His blood as well for the washing away the sins of children as of the elder sort; therefore it is very necessary that they should be partakers of the sacrament thereof.—*F. Rogers.*

[14187] Baptism was put by our Lord Himself and His apostles in the room of circumcision, as an initiatory rite into the covenant of grace; and as the infant children of believers under the Old Testament were entitled to the covenant



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benefits of the latter ordinance, and the children of Christian believers are not expressly excluded from entering into the same covenant by baptism, the absence of such an explicit exclusion is sufficient proof of their title to baptism.—*L. Watson.*

[14108] If the covenant be the same in all its spiritual blessings, and an express change was made by our Lord in the sign and seal of that covenant, but no change at all in the subjects of it, no one can have a right to carry that change further than the Lawgiver Himself, and to exclude the children of believers from entering His covenant by baptism, when they had always been entitled to enter into it by circumcision. This is a censurable interference with the authority of God; a presumptuous attempt to fashion the new dispensation in this respect so as to conform it to a mere human opinion of fitness and propriety. For to say that, because baptism is directed to be administered to believers when adults are spoken of, it follows that children who are not capable of personal faith are excluded from baptism, is only to argue in the same manner as if it were contended that, because circumcision, when adults were the subjects, was only to be administered to believers, therefore infants were excluded from that ordinance, which is contrary to the fact.—*Ibid.*

c. The absence of any prohibition of infant baptism.

[14109] A ready reason may be given why there is so little mention of baptizing infants in the New Testament, that there is neither plain precept nor example for it, as some ordinarily plead. The reason is, because there needed no such mention, baptizing of infants having been as ordinarily used in the Church of the Jews as ever it hath been in the Christian Church. It was enough to mention that Christ established baptism for an ordinance under the gospel, and then *who* should be baptized was well enough known by the use of this ordinance of old.—*Lightfoot.*

[14100] It is good plea—because there is no forbidding of the baptizing of infants in the gospel, *even* they are to be baptized; for that having been the common use among the Jews that infants should be baptized as well as men and women, our Saviour would have given some special prohibition if He intended that they should have been excluded. So that silence, in this case doth necessarily conclude approbation to have the practice continued which had been used of old before.—*Ibid.*

[14101] Availing ourselves of our liberty, we bring our children to Christ, and pray that He will bless them in and through this baptism. Who dare assert that He will refuse this? and who can fix the date, sooner or later, at which the Holy Spirit may begin in the childish heart to make the outward sign a truth and life? If anything can, certainly infant baptism may with the greatest right be brought into the domain of

preparing grace; and certainly the Lord, where He receives little children into His communion, may even in baptism say to them, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."—*J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*

[14102] There is not a single text, from Matthew to Revelation, which either directly or indirectly hints that infants should *not* be baptized. The first Christians were many of them by birth Jews. They had been accustomed in the Jewish Church, before their conversion, to have their children admitted into Church membership by a solemn ordinance, as a matter of course. Without a distinct prohibition from our Lord Jesus Christ, they would naturally go on with the same system of proceeding, and bring their children to be baptized. But *we find no such prohibition!* If Christ had intended a change, He would have said something to teach it. But He says not a word!—*Bp. Kyle.*

d. The marked tenderness displayed by our Lord towards little children.

[14103] The behaviour of our Lord Jesus Christ to little children, as recorded in the Gospels, is very peculiar and full of meaning. The well-known passage in St. Mark is an instance (Mark x. 13-16). In the parallel passage in St. Luke's Gospel the word "infants" is used, and the Greek word so rendered can only be used of infants too young to speak or be called intelligent). Now I do not pretend for a moment to say that this passage is a *direct* proof of infant baptism. But I do say that it supplies a curious answer to some of the arguments in common use among those who object to infant baptism. That infants are *capable* of receiving some benefit from our Lord, that the conduct of those who would have kept them from Him was *wrong* in our Lord's eyes, that He was ready and willing to bless them, even when they were *too young to understand* what He said or did—all these stand out as clearly as if written with a sunbeam! A stronger indirect testimony in favour of infant baptism it seems to me impossible to conceive.—*Ibid.*

[14104] How unjust shall we be if we drive away from Christ those whom He invites to Him; if we deprive them of the gifts with which He adorns them; if we exclude those whom He freely admits!—*Calvin.*

[14105] Not only in hope, but in actual reality, does the blessing on little children, whether as expressed in the Gospel story or as implied in infant baptism, acknowledge the excellency and the value of the childlike soul. Not once only in His life, but again and again, He held them up to His disciples, as the best corrective of the sins and passions of mankind. He exhorted all men to follow their innocence, their unconsciousness, their guilelessness, their truthfulness, their purity. He saw in them the regenerating sanctifying element of every family, of every household, of every nation. He saw, and we may

see, in their natural, unaffected, simple, unconstrained acts and words the best antidote to the artificial, fantastic, exclusive spirit which beset the Pharisees of His own time, and must beset the Pharisees, whether of the religious or of the irreligious world, in all times.—*Dean Stanley.*

(2) *The essential reasonableness of infant baptism.*

[14196] "What can be more monstrous," says many a Baptist, "than to administer an ordinance to an unconscious babe? It cannot possibly know anything of repentance and faith, and therefore it ought not to be baptized." The Scripture says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" and "Repent and be baptized." In reply to this argument, I ask to be shown a single text which says that *nobody* ought to be baptized until he repents and believes. I shall ask in vain. The texts just quoted prove conclusively that grown-up people who repent and believe when missionaries preach the gospel to them ought at once to be baptized. But they do not prove that their children ought not to be baptized together with them, even though they are too young to believe.—*Bp. Ryle.*

[14197] I find St. Paul baptized "the household of Stephanas," but I do not find a word about their believing. The plain truth is that the often quoted texts, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and "Repent ye and be baptized," will never carry the weight that Baptists lay upon them. To assert that they forbid any one to be baptized *unless* he repents and believes, is to put a meaning on the words which they were never meant to bear. They leave the whole question of infants entirely out of sight. The text, "Nobody shall be baptized except he repents and believes," would no doubt have been a very conclusive one. But such a text cannot be found.—*Ibid.*

[14198] Will any one tell us that an intelligent profession of repentance and faith is absolutely necessary to salvation? Would even the most rigid Baptist say that because infants cannot believe, all infants must be damned? Yet our Lord said plainly, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Will any man pretend to say that infants cannot receive grace and the Holy Ghost? . . . Will any one dare to say that infants cannot . . . be members of Christ—cannot be children of God—cannot have new hearts—cannot be born again—cannot go to heaven when they die? I cannot believe that any well-informed Baptist would give these questions any but one answer. Yet surely those who may be members of the glorious Church above may be admitted to the Church below! Those who are washed with the blood of Christ may surely be washed with the water of baptism! . . . I have seen many arguments against infant baptism, which, traced to their logical conclusion, are arguments against infant salva-

tion, and condemn all infants to eternal ruin.—*Ibid.*

[14199] Infant baptism is in a very special sense the glorification of children. It is the outward expression of their proper place in the Christian Church, and in the instincts of the civilized world. It teaches us how much we all have to learn from children, how much to enjoy, how much to imitate.—*Dean Stanley.*

[14200] It is true that our children have no consciousness of what takes place at their baptism, for they have as yet no consciousness at all. But does it follow that no real transaction can as yet take place within them? Are not the germs of all its subsequent mental and physical development latent in the newly born infant? And who could determine the time at which these really begin to be called into activity?—*Luthardt.*

[14201] The first commencement of our inward mental life lies far beyond the boundaries of our consciousness. And even still later, how much there is which lies beyond the limits of our consciousness, and never enters into it! The limits of our consciousness are far narrower than those of our mental life. How manifold are the influences, the intellectual and moral influences, which we unconsciously experience! And who would set limits to the Holy Spirit, over which it should be said that He could not pass? He has His work in the souls of children, as well as in the souls of adults.—*Ibid.*

[14202] The sacrament of baptism may well be administered to infants, not as though any psychical change were then and there wrought; not as though an effect were produced on the consciousness, when consciousness has not as yet supervened upon sensation; an effect on the moral soul when there is as yet no will, or perception of good and evil: but as most consistent with the institution of Christ; as signing and sealing to the receiver an interest in the redemption and remission of sins; and as preserving for future influence the full moral force of the words, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The infant may indeed be placed in a new condition, well worthy of being called a new birth, but in comparison of what it may become, it is in an imperfect and negative condition, it is rather a possibility than a reality, a material than a work or product.—*H. B. Wilson.*

## VII. ITS CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS.

Repentance, in order to forsake sin, and faith to believe the Divine promises made in the sacrament.

[14203] Founded, as John's baptism was, on the call to repent, and the necessity of having sin renounced and forgiven, . . . it is clear that, from the first, all who honestly approached

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to the waters of baptism must have come with a sincere confession of their own sinfulness, of their desire to obtain remission on account of it, and of their belief in the near advent of the Messiah.—*Rev. James Hamilton, D.D.*

[14204] There can be no reasonable doubt that the repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, which formed the sum of apostolic teaching, was in some form implicitly or expressly demanded of the applicants for baptism. . . . The whole tenor of the apostolic teaching, and the occasional notices furnished of their proceedings, seem plainly to indicate that they looked for such a profession of doctrinal belief and Christian practice from those who sought admission into the Church.—*Ibid.*

[14205] Baptism without faith cannot save a man, and by faith doth save him; and faith without baptism, where it cannot be had, not where it may be had and is contemned, may save him. That Spirit which works by means will not be tied to means.—*Bp. Hall's Epistles.*

[14206] Well might the apostle say, "Baptism doth even now save us," even had he left his statement in its unrestricted strength to express what in that age no one could misunderstand. But no less well was he led to add, as if with a prescience of coming evils, "Not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but—the answer of a good conscience towards God."—*Dean Stanley.*

#### VIII. ITS SOLEMNITY AND IMPORTANCE.

Baptism is a Divine ordinance, which must never be lightly viewed, and cannot be disregarded without slight to its Author.

[14207] It were indeed much to be wished that our baptismal dedication to God were more minded and thought on than it commonly is; when with such sacred solemnity we were devoted to the Triune Deity, and those great and awful names were named upon us—the name of the Father, the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Ghost.—*J. Howe.*

[14208] Baptisms are, it is to be feared, too often in the Christian world turned into a mere pageantry, and the matter scarce ever thought on more, when the show is over.—*Ibid.*

[14209] The sacrament of baptism is one thing, and the conversion of the heart is another thing; but the salvation of man is completed in them both.—*St. Augustine.*

[14210] It must be evident to any one that baptism being a holy ordinance, appointed by Christ to seal the benefits of the covenant of grace to the infant seed of the Church, it is not only rebellion against the authority of Christ, but it is very great injustice done to the children whose baptism is neglected. How would that Church be regarded whose members should

neglect the ordinance of the Lord's Supper constantly? and is the sin less where they neglect the only other sacrament? "Feed My lambs," said the risen Saviour; look well to My little ones. Let them not be deprived of the seal of the covenant.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

#### IX. ITS EFFICACY.

Baptism, to be valid, depends not on the ministerial administrator of the sacrament, but on its due administration.

[14211] It is an observable fact that in the early and signal cases mentioned in Acts viii. 12, 13, 38, the administrator of baptism should have been a deacon; for though no doubt the deacons were from the first "not ministers of meats and drinks only, but servants of the Church of God," yet were they never regarded as sharers of sacerdotal power or authority.—*Bp. Moberly.*

[14212] Saul the persecutor was baptized by "a certain disciple, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews that dwelt there." Was Ananias a priest? none can tell. His name never occurs again in history or Epistle. And yet he was personally chosen for the high and singular honour of baptizing the only apostle whose baptism is recorded in the sacred history, the great Apostle of the Gentiles. It has been well observed that there is a great significance in the obscurity of the person selected for this great duty. For it shows how truly, I might say how jealously, the Lord, though ordaining the use of outward means, and doing His own great work through human agents, yet guards His ordinance against the danger of being thought to owe anything whatever to the greatness or holiness of the human agent by whom the visible office which yet He makes indispensable is discharged.—*Ibid.*

#### X. ITS PROFANATION.

[14213] Within a few days or weeks of its birth, parents wish to have their child baptized. The wish arises many times from mere custom; all children are christened, and ours must not be different from those of our neighbours. There is sometimes, too, a little superstition, a notion that baptism is a sort of charm which will preserve an infant from all mischief if it should die; and there is the thought of getting friends together, and enjoying the festivities of what is called a christening. Whilst the child is taken to be baptized with such feelings on the part of his parents, they are provoking God to withhold His blessing from the sacrament which they thus profane; nay, I had almost said, they are provoking Him to send a curse upon them, and not a blessing.—*T. Arnold, D.D.*

[14214] We know that many persons never can be prevailed upon to come to the Lord's Supper at all, because they are afraid of eating



and drinking unworthily; yet we never hear of any who feel scruples about the sacrament of baptism, or who are afraid of offering their child to receive the seal of the Christian covenant unworthily. Yet there can be no doubt that it is as great a sin to profane one of these ordinances as to profane the other; and a man who brings his child to be baptized, without any proper feeling of the blessings communicated in that sacrament, and of his own duties, profanes it as much as he who partakes of the Lord's Supper with an unrepentant and uncharitable heart.—*Ibid.*

## XI. MODE OF ITS ADMINISTRATION.

### I. Baptism by immersion.

#### (1) *Primitive ceremonies.*

[14215] There was, as a general rule, but one baptistery in each city, and such baptisteries were apart from the churches. There was but one time of the year when the rite was administered—namely, between Easter and Pentecost. There was but one personage who could administer it—the presiding officer of the community, the bishop. There was but one hour for the ceremony—it was midnight. The torches flared through the dark hall as the troops of converts flocked in. The baptistery consisted of an inner and outer chamber. In the outer chamber stood the candidates for baptism, stripped to their shirts; and, turning to the west as the region of sunset, they stretched forth their hands through the dimly lit church, as in a defiant attitude towards the Evil Spirit of Darkness, and, speaking to him by name, said: "I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy works, and all thy pomp, and all thy service." Then they turned, like a regiment, facing right round to the east, and repeated, in a form more or less long, the belief in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, which has grown up into the Apostles' Creed in the West, and the Nicene Creed in the East. They then advanced into the inner chamber. Before them yawned the deep pool or reservoir, and standing by the deacon, or deaconess, as the case might be, to arrange that all should be done with decency, the whole troop undressed completely as if for a bath, and stood up, naked, before the bishop, who put to each the questions, to which the answer was returned in a loud and distinct voice, as of those who knew what they had undertaken. Both before and after the immersion, their bare limbs were rubbed with oil from head to foot; they were then clothed in white gowns, and received, as token of the kindly feeling of their new brotherhood, the kiss of peace, and a taste of honey and milk; and they expressed their new faith by using for the first time the Lord's Prayer.—*Dean Stanley.*

[14216] The candidate made his profession of faith, and was signed with the cross on the forehead and breast; then followed exorcism and exsufflation to cast out the evil spirit which

dwelt in him, being by nature born in sin; the priest then touched his nose and ears with spittle, saying, "Ephphatha"—"Be opened," and gave his benediction by imposition of hands, afterwards anointing the catechumen on the breast and shoulders. Salt was given to him as the symbol of a holy life, to which he was now being called or pledged. After these ceremonies followed trine immersion in the font, pointing out, as St. Cyril says, the three days' burial of Christ. The neophyte was then clothed in white, as an emblem of his new birth, and tasted the food of new-born children, milk and honey; a lighted taper was also given to him, as a token of his enlightenment by the Holy Ghost.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

(2) *Various views, both supporting and rejecting the idea of its prevalent practice in the early Church.*

[14217] That immersion was the ordinary mode of baptizing in the primitive Church is unquestionable. Tertullian says, "Ter mergitamar," we are thrice immersed, and St. Ambrose speaks of immersion in the name of each Divine Person. Immersion was the ordinary mode of baptizing during as long as twelve centuries.—*Ibid.*

[14218] The innovation of pouring water on the baptized, afterwards began in the Latin Church, and has become the general Western usage. In the Eastern Church baptism has always been by immersion, and as a modern, well-informed writer says, the Eastern Church has never ceased to protest against the innovation in the mode of baptizing of the Latin Church.—*Ibid.*

[14219] It is not probable that in a religion designed to be universal, a mode of administering this ordinance should be obligatory, the practice of which is ill adapted to so many climates, where it would either be exceedingly harsh to immerse the candidates, male and female, strong and feeble, in water; or, in some places, as in the higher latitudes, for a great part of the year, impossible. Even if immersion were in fact the original mode of baptizing in the name of Christ, these reasons make it improbable that no accommodation of the form should take place without vitiating the ordinance.—*R. Watson.*

[14220] It is most of all improbable that a religion like the Christian, so scrupulously delicate, should have enjoined the immersion of women by men, and in the presence of men. In an after age, when immersion came into fashion, baptisteries, and rooms for women, and changes of garments, and other auxiliaries to this practice, came into use, because they were found necessary to decency; but there could be no such conveniences in the first instance; and accordingly we read of none. With all the arrangements of modern times, baptism by immersion is not a decent practice; there is not a

female, perhaps, who submits to it who has not a great previous struggle with her delicacy; but that, at a time when no such accommodations could be had as have since been found necessary, such a ceremony should have been constantly performed wherever the apostles and first preachers went, and that at pools and rivers, in the presence of many spectators, and they sometimes unbelievers and scoffers, is a thing not rationally credible.—*Ibid.*

[14221] The places in the New Testament in which βάπτισμα, βαπτίζω, βάπτισμα, and βαπτισμός occur may be arranged in the following classes: 1. Those in which, taken by themselves, the presumption is in favour of immersion. To this belong those passages which speak of the persons baptized going into (εἰς) the water, and "coming up out of the water" (Matt. iii. 16; Acts viii. 38, 39); and the only presumption against immersion is the physical impossibility of thus baptizing the multitudes mentioned in Matt. iii. 5, 6. 2. Those from which the idea of immersion is excluded: such as those which relate to the baptism of the Spirit, who is said to be poured out on men: such as 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, when no drop of water touched the people; and Mark vii. 4, where beds and couches are certainly not immersed. 3. Those in which the idea of immersion, though not precluded, is improbable. The baptism of Acts ii. 41 could hardly have been by immersion in consequence of the scarcity of water. In summer there is no running stream, except the mere rill of Siloam, and it is scarcely probable that sufficient water would have been forthcoming from the reservoirs. The same scarcity of water forbade the use of private baths as a general custom, and thus also precludes the idea of bathing in such passages as Luke xi. 38; Mark vii. 2-8. The same improbability exists as to the case of the centurion in Caesarea, the jailer at Philippi, and the Ethiopian eunuch. In the second of the cases the baptism was at midnight, and in the third there is no stream of sufficient depth in the neighbourhood. That the washings (baptisms) of Mark vii. 4 should be by immersion is incredible, inasmuch as that would have to take place every time they came from a place of public assembly.—*C. Hedge, D.D.*

[14222] If immersion were indispensable, why was not καταβύσσει used? if sprinkling, why not ἵεσις or παρτίσις? Simply because the mode is nothing, and the idea everything. A word was therefore chosen which includes all the modes in which water can be employed as the means of purification. Such a word is βαπτίζω, for which there is no legitimate substitute, and therefore that word has been retained by all the churches in Christendom. In the earliest Latin Version of the New Testament the *Itala*, which goes back to the second century, and to usage connected with the apostolic age, the word is uniformly rendered "baptizo," never "immergo," showing that there was something

in the rite of baptism to which the latter did not correspond.—*Ibid.*

## 2 Baptism by affusion.

[14223] I can find nothing in the Bible to warrant the assertion that either dipping, or pouring, or sprinkling is essential to baptism. . . . So long as water is used in the name of the Trinity, the precise mode of administering the ordinance is left an open question.—*Bp. Kyle.*

[14224] The validity and benefit of baptism do not depend on the *quantity of water* employed; . . . and . . . it has been well said by a great divine, "A little drop of water may serve to seal the fulness of Divine grace in baptizing as well as a small piece of bread and the least tasting of wine in the Holy Supper."—*Ibid.*

## XII. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RITE.

### 1 As regards the formula used.

[14225] The formula of baptism is authoritatively prescribed in Matt. xxviii. 19. Christ gave a command perpetually binding on His Church to baptize men "in the name of the Father," &c. In this passage the preposition εἰς means unto, or, in reference to. Paul asks the Corinthians, "Were ye baptized εἰς τὸ ὄνομα παύλου?" (1 Cor. i. 13. Did your baptism make you disciples of Paul?) He tells them (1 Cor. x. 2) that the fathers "were baptized εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν," they were made and professed to be the disciples of Moses. So in Rom. vi. 3 it is said we "were baptized εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν" (see also Gal. iii. 27). According to this formula, he who receives baptism as a Christian rite thereby professes to stand in that relation to the Father, Son, and Spirit which those who receive the religion of Christ sustain. That is, he professes to receive God the Father as his Father, God the Son as his Saviour, and God the Holy Ghost as his teacher and sanctifier; and this involves the engagement to receive the Word, of which the Spirit is the author, as the rule of his faith and practice.—*C. Hedge, D.D.*

### 2 As regards the sacrament itself.

[14226] Our Lord instituted but two ordinances—baptism and the Lord's Supper; He erected but two monumental pillars—one without, and the other within, the church: on the first of these—that which fronts the world—He inscribed the great name of the Triune God; and, as if to render the inscription more impressive, He made it His last act. Baptism is the vestibule, or entrance, to His spiritual temple, the church; so that, before His disciples can cross the threshold, He requires them to receive the print of the sacred name; and, by making that one ceremony final, He reminds them that the holy signature is indelible.—*J. Harris, D.D.*

[14227] By baptizing us into the threefold

name of God, our Lord would impress us at the very outset of our Christian life with the fact that the work of our salvation is so vast, that it brings into action every distinction and attribute of the Divine nature; that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the entire Godhead, find ample scope for the exercise of all their perfections, and employment for all the affluence of their grace. How amazing the thought that the Godhead, the three glorious subsistences in the Divine Essence, should be all officially present to receive us in the baptismal solemnity, the porch of the church; that all the Divine Being should be there to enter into covenant relation with us; that we should there be met by the sum of excellence, and have it ascertained to us, that to the utmost extent of our capacity we are entitled to the enjoyment of the whole. An ocean of happiness placed before those whose hearts overflow with a drop! "A presumptuous idea, if our own invention; a lofty one, if revealed to us."—*Ibid.*

[14228] In baptism God sets up His covenant of grace with man, raises the rainbow of grace above his life, while the man is baptized into and in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, that is, into the communion of the three-one God.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[14229] Baptism, as the sacrament of institution to the true relation to God, may be more exactly described as the establishment of the new covenant. The religious import of a covenant is not altogether that of an agreement which man makes with God, but that of an agreement of saving grace which God makes with man; because God chooses him, singles him out of the mass of sinfulness, makes him partaker of His promises, and brings him within the range of the Spirit's influences, and those of revelation. The Old Covenant was established by an act of election; for the Lord separated Abraham to the true worship, made His covenant with him and with his seed, and instituted circumcision as the sign of the covenant. In like manner the New Covenant was established by an act of election; for the new Adam set His disciples apart from the race of mankind, and established in them the new relationship to God. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John xv. 16). But baptism is for all successive generations what the personal choice of Christ was for the apostles—our ancestors in faith—an act of election, whereby salvation begins to become historically active for the individual baptized.—*Ibid.*

[14230] What is it I baptize when the little child is brought to me? Do I baptize something that is only six weeks old? No. I baptize human life; it is the life I baptize, and not the register of birth! I am not here as an insurance agent, but as a Christian minister; and as soon as I can get hold of human life I baptize it in the great threefold name that makes all other names names of life.—*J. Parker, D.D.*

### 3 As regards the sign of the cross.

[14231] The cross which was signed on my forehead when I was baptized is God's sign to me that I am to sacrifice myself and give up my own will to do God's will, even as the Lord Jesus did when He gave Himself to die, because it was His Father's will. And because I belong to Jesus Christ, because God has called me to be His child, therefore He will help me. He will help me to conquer this low, brutish nature of mine. He will put His Spirit into me, the Spirit of His Son Jesus Christ, that I may trust Him, cry to Him, My Father! that I may love Him; understand His will, and see how good, and noble, and beautiful, and full of peace and comfort it is; delight in obeying Him; glory in sacrificing my own fancies and pleasures for His sake; and find my only honour, my only happiness, in doing His will on earth as saints and angels do it in heaven.—*Canon Kingsley.*

### 4 As regards the publicity of administration.

[14232] A parent who was about to leave his congregation because the minister had refused to baptize his child in private, was kept from carrying his foolish purpose into execution by a representation of the true nature of infant baptism, as a solemn recognition by the Church of the babe as one of her members, a child of God's house, a born citizen of Christ's kingdom. He had been under the impression that private baptism is a mark of distinction to be expected by important members for their children, and that thus in effect his child would be sealed, not as "holy," but as genteel. Such bathos is not very uncommon even among otherwise intelligent professing Christians. Might it not be made nearly if not quite impossible by a form of baptism carefully framed for the purpose of duly manifesting the fact, that what takes place is a solemn reception by the Church of one who is her member by institution of Christ?—*Prof. Macgregor.*

[14233] There are not a few dead-alive in our churches through sheer solitariness. Through this and that cause they have become isolated, left alone in the world. Their social affections are thus dormant, and to their enjoyment as if dead. They may bitterly feel and lament their solitariness, perhaps in spirit complain of it, as if the providence of Christ had given them no sphere for those affections toward man the exercise of which is so large a part of our happiness as well as of our duty towards God. To such an one the baptism of an infant, duly considered, might be as life from the dead, through recalling to mind the fact that no one, except through wilful neglect of privilege as well as duty, can ever be solitary who is a member of the Church, since every Church member has a born brother or sister in every child that enters Christ's visible kingdom. If adult Church members would but seriously think of this when they are in form receiving an infant member into His Church, then every baptism might at once be a blessing to all, and every



[14233—14239]

infant the unconscious minister of that blessing : the tiny rill of life here beginning might thus prove as the stream which blesses the tree that shades it.—*Ibid.*

[14234] Parents are reminded by it of the necessity of acquainting themselves with God's covenant, that they may diligently teach it to their children ; and that, as they have covenanted with God for their children, they are bound thereby to enforce the covenant conditions upon them as they come to years—by *example*, as well as by education ; by *prayer*, as well as by profession of the name of Christ.—*R. Watson.*

### XIII. SUPERSTITIOUS DOGMAS ATTACHED TO THE RITE.

[14235] There was the belief in early ages that it was like a magical charm, which acted on the persons who received it, without any consent or intention either of administrator or recipient, as in the case of children or actors performing the rite with no serious intention. There was also the belief that it wiped away all sins, however long they had been accumulating, and however late it was administered. This is illustrated by the delay of the baptism of the first Christian Emperor Constantine, who had presided at the Council of Nicæa, preached in churches, directed the whole religion of the empire, and yet was all the while unbaptized till the moment of his death, when, in the last hours of his mortal illness, the ceremony was performed by Eusebius of Nicomedia. There was also the belief, now entirely extinct, but in the third and fourth centuries almost as firmly fixed as the corresponding belief in regard to the Eucharist, that the water was changed into the blood of Christ.—*Dean Stanley.*

[14236] No more dreadful superstition was held in the early days of the Church than this, that no one could be saved unless he had passed through baptism. It was not the effect of Divine grace upon the soul, but of the actual water upon the body, on which those ancient Baptists built their hopes of immortality. Let but the person of a human being be wrapt in the purifying element, and he was redeemed from the uncleanness of his birth. The boy Athanasius throwing water in the sea over his playmate on the seashore in the name of the Holy Trinity, performed, as it was believed, a valid baptism ; the apostles in the spray of the storm on the Sea of Galilee, the penitent thief in the water that rushed from the wound of the Crucified—(such were the wild excesses to which some ventured without censure to carry the doctrine)—received the baptism which had else been withheld from them. And thus "washing of water" was now deemed absolutely necessary for salvation. No human being could pass into the presence of God hereafter unless he had passed through the waters of baptism here. "Thus," says Vossius, "is the judgment of all antiquity, that they perish everlastingly who will not be baptized when they may."—*Ibid.*

### XIV. ST. PAUL'S REFERENCE TO BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD.

[14237] A great variety of interpretations have been proposed in explanation of the peculiar words, "those baptized for the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 29), but nothing altogether satisfactory can yet be said to have been produced. In several of the interpretations respect is supposed to have been had to views and practices which were of much later growth than the apostolic age, and which could never, even if they had existed, have been referred to in this argumentative manner by the apostle. This holds especially of the notion that the allusion is to the practice of receiving baptism vicariously for friends who had died before the rite had been administered to them—a practice which "was never adopted, except by some obscure sects of Gnostics, who seem to have founded their custom on this very passage" (Conybeare and Howson, ii. 59). The view rather to be adopted is that which contemplates the baptized as ever coming forward to fill up the vacancies created by the deceased ; so that the one rush in as it were to supply the place of the other.—*Rev. James Hamilton, D.D.*

[14238] The apostle represents one set of Christians succeeding another ; when their ranks were thinned by death, others rushed in to supply their place. The hardships and sufferings, to which their deceased friends had been exposed, did not deter others from taking their place, and exposing themselves to the same hardships and sufferings. But, asks the apostle, if there be no resurrection of the dead, why do the baptized take the places of the dead ? Why do they voluntarily submit to the like sufferings for their faith ? Why are they baptized in the room of the dead ? Such an interpretation well agrees with what directly follows : "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour ? I protest by your (our) rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus the Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not ? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Indeed, this is the only interpretation which fully agrees with the immediate context ; it connects the baptism for the dead with the suffering of believers, and therefore this is a strong presumption in favour of its correctness.—*Paton J. Glog.*

[14239] They are baptized in the room of the dead. What a truly noble idea does this interpretation give us of Christians ! They are their successors, their followers ; they step into their places ; they occupy their ground ; they fill up their ranks ; they fight in the battle in which their companions have fallen. And especially, in the season of persecution, what a touching scene it must have been to see the baptized rushing into the ranks of those who have fallen, nobly enduring the same sufferings, meeting the same doom, like soldiers occupying the breach which death had made in their ranks,

thus verifying the observation of the Fathers, that "the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church."—*Ibid.*

[14240] This interpretation gives us a striking view of the nature of baptism. "Baptized in the room of the dead." Baptism thus unites the baptized living with the baptized dead; it constitutes us the successors of those who have gone before us; it is the ceremony of our enrolment into the great army of the living God; it ensures the perpetuity of the Church, and supplies it with a constant succession of those who bear the name of Jesus. Baptism also binds us to do the work of those holy men and women who have died in the Lord; it is a solemn consecration to the service of Christ; it puts us in the place of the dead; it imposes upon us those duties which they in their life performed, and enables us to look forward with hope to those rewards which they now enjoy.—*Ibid.*

#### XV. POSITION OF THE SACRAMENT IN THEOLOGY.

[14241] Many in the present day seem to regard baptism with perfect indifference. They pass it by, and give it no place or position in their religion. . . . They seem to regard the whole subject of baptism as a troublesome question, which they are determined to let alone. They are neither satisfied with it nor without it. . . . It is simply unreasonable to suppose that the Great Head of the Church would burden His people in all ages with an empty, powerless, profitless institution. It is ridiculous to suppose His apostles would speak as they do about baptism if in no case, and under no circumstances, could it be of any use to man's soul.—*Bp. Ryle.*

[14242] Let a man read the New Testament honestly and impartially for himself. Let him come to the reading of it with an unprejudiced, fair, and unbiassed mind. Let him not bring with him preconceived opinions, and a blind reverence for the opinion of any uninspired writing of any man, or of any set of men. Let him simply ask the question, "What does Scripture teach about baptism and its place in Christian theology?"—and I have little doubt as to the conclusion he will come to. He will neither trample baptism under his feet, nor exalt it over his head.—*Ibid.*

### 4

#### HOLY COMMUNION.

##### I. NATURE OF THIS SACRAMENT.

"The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather it is a Sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death" (27th Article).

[14243] He who makes the Lord's Supper a

humanitarian brotherly repast has indeed escaped the offence, but has also forfeited the blessing of the cross.—*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*

[14244] The Lord's Supper was not meant to be a mere social feast, indicating the love that should exist among believers. We were never intended to regard it in this cold and tame light. The notion of the author of "Ecce Homo," that "the Christian communion is a club dinner," is not only a degrading one, but one that cannot be reconciled with the language of its Founder at the time of institution.—*Bp. Ryle.*

[14245] Feeding on the character of Christ is an idea which may satisfy a Socinian, or any one who rejects the doctrine of the atonement. But the true Christian who feeds especially on the vicarious death of Christ, and not His character, will see that death prominently exhibited in the Lord's Supper, and find his faith in that death quickened by the use of it. It was meant to carry his mind back to the sacrifice once made on Calvary, and not merely to the incarnation; and no lower view will ever satisfy a true Christian's heart.—*Ibid.*

[14246] As the Passover in Israel was to be a means of renewing the recollection of the covenant of the Lord with Israel, and as an act of thanksgiving for the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the Lord's Supper is in like manner a commemoration and a giving of thanks—a *Eucharist*—on account of the propitiation and redemption provided in Christ; a sacred feast in which the partakers "show forth the Lord's death." In partaking of the bread, they must think with gratitude of Him whose body was broken in death; in partaking of the cup, they must think of Him whose blood was shed for the remission of sins.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[14247] Were the Lord's Supper merely a commemorative ordinance, to celebrate Christ's death, and not one of *communion* also, making us *partakers* of that death and all its glorious results, whence comes the injunction, not merely to break bread and pour out wine, but to *eat* the bread, and *drink* the wine, on which the Lord has laid the whole stress of the sacramental rite? "Take, *eat*; this is My body." "*Drink* ye all of this, for this is My blood." Just because eating and drinking are natural and expressive emblems of *receiving into incorporation with oneself*, and of becoming *perused by and assimilated to*, that of which the things eaten or drunk are the representation.—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

[14248] This is the import of—not exhibiting merely, but—*eating and drinking*, bread and wine, in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper: it is the outward sign of an *inward and spiritual grace*; the symbol of receiving Christ Himself, by meditative thought, into the heart, even as the bread and wine are received by the mouth into the body; a symbol, therefore, and a means, of our maintaining that union of thought and

feeling and purpose with our blessed Lord, by which we become assimilated to His likeness and partakers of His life.—*Ibid.*

[14249] God and man mutually partaking of that which is symbolized and conveyed by bread and wine—God, in the plenitude of His love, speaking to man in accents of comfort over this celestial food; and man, in return, addressing God in the loud accents of Eucharist (that is, of praise and thanksgiving), that is *the* Holy Communion, that, and nothing less, that, and (for what can be more?) nothing more.—*Dean Goulburn.*

## II. ITS VARIED DESIGNATION.

[14250] It is called a *sacrament*, that is, a *sign* and an *oath*. An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace; an *oath*, by which we bind our souls with a bond unto the Lord. It is called the *Lord's Supper*, because it was first instituted in the evening, and at the close of the Passover Supper; and because we therein feed upon Christ, the Bread of Life (Rev. iii. 20; 1 Cor. xi.) It is called the *Communion*, as herein we commune with Christ, and with His people (1 Cor. xii. 13, x. 17). It is called the *Eucharist*, a thanksgiving, because Christ, in the institution of it, gave thanks (1 Cor. xi. 24), and because we, in the participation of it, must give thanks likewise. It is called a *Feast*, and by some a feast upon sacrifice (though not a sacrifice itself), in allusion to the custom of the Jews feasting upon their sacrifices (1 Cor. x. 18).—*Buck.*

[14251] The Eucharist is the great feast of the Church. First, it is a true feast for the nourishment of the spiritual life; secondly, it is a sacred feast sanctifying from all carnal enjoyment; thirdly, it is a covenant feast, sealing redemption; fourthly, it is a love feast, uniting the redeemed; fifthly, it is a supper feast, fore-festival of death, of the end of all things, of the coming of Christ.—*Professor Lange.*

[14252] What, then, is the meaning of the term *communion*? It means mutual participation, involving intercourse—nothing more, and nothing less. If I address you, without a reply on your part, or if you apply to me for some privilege which I have it in my power to bestow, that is not communion, but only one-sided speech. If we take a meal, as Elijah did under the juniper tree, in solitude and silence, that is not communion, but a simple reception of food. But if two parties discuss a subject, and convey to one another the views which they respectively entertain, or if they sit down to a common entertainment, and partake of the same fare, that is communion, the communion of conversation in the one case, the communion of festivity in the other. In either case there is a mutual participation. In the one the topic, in the other the viands, are the thing shared in common. And in either case there is mutual intercourse.

Conversation is the intercourse of mind with mind, and conversation (proverbially) flows most easily over the festive board. Now, then, what is the *Holy Communion*—*the* Communion, specially and emphatically so called? What is the distinctive feature which characterizes it? in what consists its difference from the forms of earthly and social communion, to which I have adverted? In this principally: that the parties to the sharing, and the parties to the intercourse, are not merely man and his neighbour, but God and man.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[14253] *Communion* properly means the *sharing something* in common with another. Hence, in the Christian sense, it signifies the sharing *Divine converse* or intercourse, and as this takes place sacramentally in the Lord's Supper, the word, in a third stage, signifies a *joint participation* in a spiritual sense of the body and blood of Christ, *i.e.*, of His Spirit (John vi. 33) in that sacrament. . . . Communion is that which is sought and spiritually partaken of by the *receiver*, not that which is actually conveyed by any person as the *giver*.—*Encyclopædia (McClintock and Strong).*

[14254] Of the several names by which the Supper of the Lord has been at different times distinguished, that of the Holy Communion is the one which the Church of England has adopted for her members. The rubrics, articles, and canons almost invariably employ this designation.—*Ibid.*

## III. ITS PRIMAL INSTITUTION.

[14255] The action itself, or rather the whole rite, consisting of divers actions, we see plainly described in the Gospels, and in the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, distinguishable into these chief parts. 1. The benediction and consecration, by prayer and thanksgiving, of bread and wine. 2. The breaking of bread, and handling the cup. 3. The delivery and distribution of them to the persons present. 4. The declaration, accompanying that delivery, that those symbolical things and actions did represent our Saviour's body given and broken, our Saviour's blood shed and poured out for us. 5. The actual partaking of those symbols, by eating the bread and drinking the wine, done by all present. These things we find done at the first institution and exemplary practice of this holy ceremony, the which our Saviour obliged us to imitate, saying, "Do this in remembrance of Me."—*Barrow.*

[14256] There followeth, in St. Matthew and St. Mark, presently after the narration of the divers actions of the first institution of the supper—"And having sung a hymn, they went to the Mount of Olives;" which action was, indeed, in itself proper to conclude the practice of this holy rite, yet what reference it hath thereto cannot thence be determined; however,



with these the Church hath always joined several acts of devotion, confessions, prayers, praises, thanksgivings, intercessions, vows, suitable to the nature and design of the sacrament, apt to glorify God and edify the faithful in the celebration thereof.—*Ibid.*

#### IV. ITS ORIGINAL INTENTION.

"For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby" (The Church Catechism).

"As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26).

[14257] The sacrifice is only one, and once for all, and can never, and will never, be repeated. But as among the mountains the crash of the falling avalanche, or the clang of the shepherd's horn, is reverberated from peak to peak, until the distant summit has caught and given back the sound, so the echoes of the great sacrifice, and of that exceeding strong and bitter cry with which it was consummated, shall pass down the vista of ages from generation to generation, till time shall be no longer. And when two or three meet together in Christ's name, and His covenanted presence, screened from the eye of sense, tabernacles among them, and when the priest takes the bread and breaks it with words of blessing before God, and pours out the wine into the chalice, reciting, in simple and solemn formula, how upon the cross Christ "by the oblation of Himself, once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world"—hark!—it is an echo from Calvary, which has come down to us along the ages—an echo, whose accents are of unspeakable consolation—as voiceful with love and grace in the churches of the nineteenth century as they were in the upper chambers and subterranean crypts of the first.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[14258] This sacrament is a more special and particular representation and setting forth of Christ as our Redeemer than either the written or preached word. God has appointed Him to be *evidently crucified before our eyes*, that every poor soul that is stung with sin, and ready to die by sin, should look up to Him and be healed.—*F. Owen, D.D.*

[14259] Unless the supper be regarded as designed to keep the death of Christ prominently and imperishably in view, it cannot be understood. It is an impressive and vivifying exponent of Christ's decease; and however varied may be its relations—however comprehensive and illumining its significance, here all its meaning centres, and hence all its teaching radiates. It shows the Lord's death—shows in what capacity and with what intent He died; and a right view of His death so obtained becomes expository of all other aspects and uses of this solemnity.—*Rev. David King, LL.D.*

[14260] If we were not so familiar with the subject, we should be at once struck with the singularity of assigning such honouring celebration to such a catastrophe as Christ's decease. Why so press on considerate attention the gloomy end of fallen humanity? There is joy when a man is born into the world, and the event is often the occasion of mirthful festivities. Our departure hence is regarded, on the contrary, with awe and disrelish, and if the eminent and useful are removed, their removal causes gratulation to none but the selfish or vindictive. Yet contemplation is here summoned and required to be pre-eminently directed to the expiring moments and mortal sufferings of Christ. He wills to be ever present to thought and affection, as pouring out His soul unto death—bowing the head, and giving up the ghost.—*Ibid.*

[14261] It is said that attention is claimed after all not to Christ's death itself, but to some of its concomitants as memorable—to the doctrine or example of the distinguished sufferer—the assertion is gratuitous. It is made not only without proof, but against proof—in direct opposition to all the language of institution, directing contemplation and assigning consequence to a broken body, to shed blood, and in every way to a death of violence.—*Ibid.*

[14262] What the peculiarity of Christ's death is we are not left to conjecture. The institution in all its diction and action testifies, and its essential value largely consists in testifying, that Christ's decease was expiatory. This will be apparent if we observe more particularly how it allies His death with *covenant* and *forgiveness*. He said, "This cup is the new testament in My blood, shed for the remission of sins unto many."—*Ibid.*

[14263] When we eat and drink, we do show the Lord's death until He come. His death, not His life, though that was lustrous with a holiness without the shadow of a stain. His death, not His teaching, though that embodied the fulness of a wisdom that was Divine. His death, not His miracles, though His course was a march of mercy, and in His track of blessing the world rejoiced and was glad. His death! His body, not glorious, but broken; His blood, not coursing through the veins of a conqueror, but shed, poured out for man. His death! Still His death! Grandest and most consecrating memory both for earth and heaven!—*Wm. M. Punshon.*

#### V. IMPORT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ORDINANCE.

##### I Actual.

"The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine" (The Church Catechism).

[14264] It is strength and gladness which our faith and life must derive from the Lord's

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Supper. What the sacraments signify they bestow.—*Luther*.

[14265] In prayer, we speak to God; in preaching, God speaks to us; but in the Sacred Supper, there is a mutual intercourse and a reciprocal approach.—*Anon.*

[14266] I put as much difference between the sacraments of Christ, and all other signs and tokens not appointed for sacraments, as I do between the seal of a prince, that is annexed unto the writing or charter that containeth all the prince's right and title that he hath unto his realm, and the king's arms painted in a glass window. Such seals, annexed unto so weighty writings, be no less esteemed than the whole right, title, or claim that is confirmed by the seal, though the matter of the seal be nothing but wax, not for the value of the matter, but for the use that the matter is appointed unto. And he that would take upon him to deny the king's seal in such a purpose, and say, "It is but a piece of wax," it were no less than treason, and a very contempt of the king himself; because the king hath appointed that seal to be honourably received and reverently used of all men. And as the writings sealed doth confirm and declare the right of the owner unto all the world; so doth the sacraments confirm the assurance of everlasting life unto the faithful, and declareth the same to all the world. And as the matter, substance, and land itself is not corporally or really contained in the writing, neither brought (when any matter of controversy is for the land) before the judge with the writing; no more is the corporal body of Christ brought before the Church, neither with the bread, nor in the bread, nor under the bread, nor by the bread, nor before the bread, nor after the bread. But when the minister delivereth unto me the thing that is in his power to deliver, to say, the bread and wine, rehearsing the words of Christ's institution, the Holy Ghost delivereth unto my faith, which is mounted and ascended into heaven, the precious body and blood of my Saviour Jesus Christ spiritually and not corporally. So doth the merits of this precious body in heaven feed my poor wretched soul upon the earth.—*Wm. Hooper.*

[14267] To the devout communicant the Supper of the Lord is not a sign only, to the mind; setting out vividly before it the fact of Christ's vicarious death and passion—nor a motive only, for the heart; stirring in it, by the exhibition of that fact, its best emotions of gratitude, and veneration, and all-embracing love; but that it is, moreover, a divinely appointed means of direct infusion of the Spirit of Christ into the will; raising what is low therein, purifying what is earthly, settling what is inconstant, and "strengthening us with all might, by God's Spirit, in the inner man."—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

[14268] This is the great means appointed by our blessed Saviour whereby to communicate Himself, and all the merits of His death and

passion, to us. Inasmuch that by a due and frequent receiving of this Holy Sacrament our souls would be as much strengthened and refreshed by the body and blood of Christ as our bodies are by bread and wine. By our frequent conversing with our blessed Lord at His table here below, we shall be always ready and fit to go to Him, and converse with Him in His kingdom above, when we shall have no more need of sacraments, but shall see Him "face to face," and adore Him for evermore.—*E. Beveridge.*

[14269] The difference between other manifestations of Christ's presence in the soul, and that which takes place by means of this sacrament, is simply this, that in the latter the Lord guarantees to the believing communicant a new communication of His full salvation so positively that we dare not doubt it.—*W. Nast, D.D.*

[14270] As the Israelite received a new assurance of the blessings of the covenant as often as he appropriated to himself the typical sacrifice by eating of the paschal lamb—so the personal and vital union, into which true believers have entered with Christ by appropriating the benefits of His propitiatory death, is renewed, sealed, and strengthened as often as they partake of the emblems of His broken body and shed blood. As there can be no appropriation of the merits of Christ's death, except through a personal and vital union with Christ, so there can be no other vital union with Christ, except through the appropriation of the benefits of His atonement. The communion of the death of Christ and the personal, vital union with Christ, sustain a necessary reciprocal relation to each other. This cardinal truth is the central idea of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. In the solemn moments of His last meal, which He introduced by some remarks concerning His impending bodily separation from His disciples, our Saviour intended to seal, by the sacrament, the personal, vital union, into which the believer enters with Him by virtue of His atoning death and through faith.—*Ibid.*

[14271] What did our Lord promise when He added, "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him"? I answer briefly—That this is a promise of intimate and abiding union with Christ, as the result of spiritually feeding on Him as our sacrifice. It expresses that effectual oneness with Christ, that His privileges become ours, and we become complete in Him; so that whatsoever Christ is in relation to the Father as His beloved Son, the first-born among many brethren—that are the followers of Christ, in Him—partakers of the same favour of God—the same influences of His Spirit—the same eternal life.—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

[14272] The mystery of an actual communion with Christ is the mystery of the Holy Communion.—*Julius Müller.*

[14273] We cannot trust our hearts and inward feelings ; but that bread, that wine, we can trust. Our inward feelings are a sign from man ; that bread and wine are a sign from God. Our inward feelings may tell us what we feel towards God ; that bread, that wine, tell us something ten thousand times more important—they tell us what God feels towards us. God must love us before we can love Him ; God must pardon us before we can have mercy on ourselves ; God must come to us, and take hold of us, before we can cling to Him ; God must change us before we can become right ; God must give us eternal life in our hearts before we can feel and enjoy that new life in us. Then that bread, that wine, say that God has done that for us already—they say God does love you ; God has pardoned you ; God has come to you ; God is ready and willing to change and convert you ; God has given you eternal life ; and this love, this mercy, this coming to find you out while you are wandering in sin—this change, this eternal life—are all in His Son Jesus Christ, and that bread, that wine, are the signs of it.—*Canon Kingsley.*

[14274] It is simply because Jesus Christ was man, and you, too, are men and women—wearing the flesh and blood which Christ wore, eating and drinking as Christ ate and drank—and not for any works or faith of your own, that God loves you, and has come to you, and called you into His family. This is the gospel, the good news of Christ's free grace and pardon and salvation ; and that bread and that wine, the common food of all men—not merely of the rich, or the wise, or the pious, but of saints and penitents, rich and poor, Christians and heathens alike—that plain, common, everyday bread and wine, are the signs of it.—*Ibid.*

[14275] What better sign would you have ? There is no mistaking the message of the bread and wine ; they can tell you no lies, and they can, and will, bring your own gospel blessings to your mind. They will make you feel that you are the beloved children of God—heirs of all that your King and God has bought for you, when He died and rose again. He gave you the Lord's Supper for a sign. Do you think that He did not know what the best sign would be ? He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." Do you think that He did not know better than you and me, and all men, that if you did it, it would put you in remembrance of Him ?—*Ibid.*

[14276] This sacrament declares that union which Christians, partaking thereof, have with Christ ; their mystical insertion into Him, by a close dependence upon Him for spiritual life, mercy, grace, and salvation ; a constant adherence to Him by faith and obedience, a near conformity to Him in mind and affection ; an inseparable conjunction with Him, by the strictest bands of fidelity, and by the most endearing relations : which things could not more fitly be

set out than by the partaking our best and most necessary food, which being taken soon becomes united to us, assimilated and converted into our substance, thereby renewing our strength and repairing the decays of our nature ; wherefore, "he," saith our Saviour, "that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him ;" and "The cup of blessing," saith St. Paul, "which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ?" We, in the outward action, partake of the symbols representing our Saviour's body and blood ; we, in the spiritual intention, communicate of His very person, being, according to the manner insinuated, intimately united to Him.—*Barrow.*

## 2 Emblematic.

*The union of the Christian brotherhood.*

[14277] The doctrine of universal benevolence and charity is very plainly symbolized in the Lord's Supper. As a meeting or communion it is clearly designed to express a certain fellowship between those who share it ; by admitting all Christians without distinction on equal terms, it expresses the universal character of the society. The meal consisted of bread and wine, the simplest and in those countries most universal elements of food ; and when men of different nations or degrees sat or knelt together and received, as from the hand of God, this simple repast, they were reminded in the most forcible manner of their common human wants, and their common character of pensioners on the bounty of the Universal Father.—*Ecce Homo.*

[14278] By this sacrament is signified and sealed that union which is among our Saviour's true disciples communicating therein ; their being together united in consent of mind and unity of faith, in mutual good-will and affection, in hope and tendency to the same blessed end, in spiritual brotherhood and society, especially upon account of their communion with Christ, which most closely ties them one to another ; their partaking of this one individual food become translated, as it were, into one body and substance. "Seeing," saith St. Paul, "we, being many, are one bread, one body : for all of us do partake of one bread."—*Barrow.*

[14279] "We, being many," says St. Paul (that is, we, though many), "are one bread and one body." Now it is this great principle of unity in the midst of multiplicity which constitutes the fundamental law of beauty, and therefore of gratification, in every class of things. In nature, it exhibits simplicity of end amidst complexity of means. In art, it produces the unity of the design amidst the variety of the component parts. In morals, it combines singleness of purpose with versatility of effort. In social life, it maintains identity of taste and feeling amidst diversity of temperament. In religion, it harmonizes all that is peculiar to the individual Christian, with



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all that he holds in common with the universal family of God. It brings out to view, both before our own minds, and before the minds of our fellow-saints, our points of resemblance, rather than of dissimilarity. It gathers us into a class, neglecting the specific differences. It merges the individual in the congregation—the congregation in the Church of which it is an integral part—the Church particular in the Church universal—and the Church visible in “the whole family in heaven and earth” which is named of Christ, and gathered together in one in Christ.—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

[14280] If the sacrament of baptism may be called the sacrament of diffusion, the Holy Communion is the sacrament of unity; the binding, uniting rite, which, while it testifies to spiritual union, also produces it; which, while it sanctifies the separate souls of the faithful communicants, sanctifies them also in the union of their sacred Christian brotherhood; which feeds the individuals through the general body, and feeds the general body again through the sanctification of individuals.—*Bp. Moberly.*

[14281] The altar of Holy Communion is the perpetual centre of the unity of the Church. Not localized in Rome, not virtually inherent in a single bishop—in parish, in diocese, in province, the altar of Holy Communion is set up in all the Church as the centre to all the Christian people within that parish, diocese, or province, to which they must seek as to the central source of continued blessing, personal and general, the true ubiquitous centre of that unity of the entire body from which their own personal graces first began, and upon which they must, in great measure, still depend.—*Ibid.*

[14282] It was the practice of the ancient Arabs to sign their treaties with blood drawn from their own veins. Even in modern times, when the Scottish peasants and nobles desired to express their adhesion to the Solemn League and Covenant, they in some instances wrote their names with their blood. There are also examples of conspirators binding themselves together by the practice of drinking a cup filled with human blood, as the most solemn mode of testifying their adhesion to each other. There is again the expression and the image familiar to all of us, of the soldier, the martyr, the patriot shedding his blood for the good of his country, his cause, his religion. And of all these examples of the sacrifice of life, of the shedding of blood, the most sacred, the most efficacious, is that which was offered and shed on Calvary, because it was the offering made not for war or aggression, but for peace and reconciliation; not in hatred, but in love; not by a feeble, erring, ordinary mortal, but by Him who is by all of us acknowledged to be the ideal of man and the likeness of God. It is, therefore, this final and supreme test of our love and loyalty that the cup of the Eucharist suggests—our willingness,

if so be, to sacrifice our own selves, to shed our own blood for what we believe to be right and true and for the good of others.—*Dean Stanley.*

### 3 Prophetic.

[14283] The Supper is a fact-prophecy, a pre-representation and anticipation of that union with the Lord which shall one day take place in the kingdom of bliss; and not only of union with the Lord, but also of the deep communion of love and life, which in that blessed kingdom will bind believers to each other. For by means of the Supper believers are fused into one body, since they all, as the apostle says, “become partakers of the same bread” (1 Cor. x. 17).—*Bp. Martensen.*

## VI. THE REAL PRESENCE.

### 1 Teaching of the Church of England.

“To such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same (i.e., Lord’s Supper), the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ” (28th Article).

“The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith” (Ibid.).

[14284] The doctrine of the real Presence is, in one sense, the doctrine of the Church of England. She asserts that the body and blood of Christ are “verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord’s Supper.” And she asserts equally that such presence is not material or corporal (Art. xxviii.). . . Christ’s presence is effectual for all those intents and purposes for which His body was broken, and His blood shed. As to a presence elsewhere than in the heart of the believer, the Church of England is silent.—*Abp. Longley.*

[14285] When the Lord said, “He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life,” He bade not His disciples to eat the body wherewith He was enclosed, nor to drink that blood which He shed for us; but He meant that holy morsel which is in a ghostly way His body and blood; and he that tasteth it with believing heart hath everlasting life.—*Ælfric.*

[14286] What is external can never, except through the spirit, touch the spirit. To suppose that the material can of itself reach the spiritual is not religion, but magic.—*Dean Stanley.*

[14287] As in the communion with our actual friends it is not the countenance that we value, but the mind which speaks through the countenance—it is not the sound of the words, but the meaning of the words, that we delight to hear—so also must it be in communion with One who, the more we know and think of Him, can have no other than a moral and spiritual relation to us. “After the flesh we know Him no more.”

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[HOLY COMMUNION.]

It is, as the English Prayer Book expresses it, "His one oblation of Himself once offered."—*Ibid.*

[14288] An instrument or conveyance of lands from one party to another, being fairly engrossed on parchment, with wax fastened unto it, is no more than ordinary parchment and wax; but when it comes once to be sealed and delivered to the use of the party concerned, then it is changed into another quality, and made a matter of high concernment. Thus the elements of bread and wine are the same in substance with the other bread and wine before and after the administration; but being once separated from a common to a holy use—when Christ's name is set on them in regard of institution, consecration, operation, and blessing attending on them, then they become Christ's bread and God's wine, and the tables God's tables too—not the bread of the buttry, but of the sanctuary—not the wine of the grape, but of the vine Christ Jesus, sealing unto us the pardon and remission of our sins; so that, in the right receiving thereof, we must look not so much on the elements what they are, but what they signify; look through the bush, and see God—through the sacrament, and see Jesus Christ to our comfort.—*Edlin.*

[14289] With all certainty or persuasion let us partake of it as of the body and blood of Christ; for under the type of bread His body is given to thee, and under the type of wine His blood is given to thee, that, partaking of the body and blood of Christ, thou mayest be of one body and blood with Him.—*St. Cyril of Jerusalem.*

[14290] There is a real spiritual presence of Christ with the hearts of all true-hearted communicants in the Lord's Supper. Those wonderful words of institution were never meant to teach that the bread in the Lord's Supper was literally Christ's body, or the wine literally Christ's blood. But our Lord did mean to teach that every right-hearted believer who ate that bread and drank that wine in remembrance of Christ would in so doing find a special presence of Christ in his heart, and a special revelation of Christ's sacrifice of His own body and blood to his soul.—*Bp. Ryle.*

[14291] There is a special presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, which they only know who are faithful communicants, and which they who are not communicants miss altogether.—*Ibid.*

[14292] The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not to be sought in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament.—*Hooker.*

## 2 Teaching of the Church of Rome.

*Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper.*

"Cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but it is

repugnant to the plain words of Scripture" (28th Article).

[14293] The Romish Church sinks the earthly element in the heavenly; it is miraculously changed by the consecration of the ordained priest. It is no longer bread and wine, it only *seems* bread and wine; it is, in truth, only the body and blood of Christ.—*Luther.*

[14294] By the doctrine of transubstantiation the disciples ate, in the first instance, a crucified Saviour before He had been crucified, and the living Saviour put His deceased self into their hands. The tenet involves contradictions so palpable and numerous, that a long list of them has become stereotyped in such discussions.—*Rev. David King, LL.D.*

[14295] How canst thou, O priest, who art but a man, make thy Maker? What! the thing that groweth in the fields, the ear which thou pluckest to-day, shall be God to-morrow! As you cannot make the works which He made, how then shalt thou make Him that made the works? Woe be to them that hear the testimony of the Pope rather than of the gospel.—*Wycliffe.*

[14296] St. Stephen saw Christ sitting at the right hand of His Father, and thought it a special revelation of God: but he never said that he saw Him at the communion, or that he made Him every day himself. And in the Acts of the Apostles St. Peter saith that Christ must needs keep the heaven till all be ended. Esay, Solomon, and St. Stephen say, that God dwelleth not in temples made with man's hand. St. Paul wisheth that he were dissolved and dead, and were with Christ (Phil. i. 23): not in the altar, doubtless, where he might be daily, but in heaven.—*Abp. Grindal.*

[14297] We should not expect to arrive at the secret of Hamlet by eating a bit of Shakespeare's body; and so, though we ate ever so much of the material bones or flesh of the Founder of the Eucharist, we should not arrive one whit nearer to "the mind which was in Christ Jesus."—*Bp. Ewing.*

## 3 Teaching of the Lutheran Church.

*Consubstantiation, or the commingling of the sacramental elements with the body and blood of Christ.*

[14298] The Lutheran belief in the real Presence is, that after consecration of the Eucharist the substance of the Lord's body and blood coexists in union with the substance of bread and wine, just as iron and fire are united in a bar of heated iron. The belief of the ancient Church, that after consecration the species of bread and wine coexisted with the sacramental body and blood, must not be considered as identical with the Lutheran tenet, which implies a material conception of the heavenly mystery, as if in an earthly mode bread and wine were mixed with the Lord's body and blood—an opinion opposed to Scrip-

ture and the teaching of the Church.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[14299] The invention of the theory of consubstantiation is attributed to Luther, and will be found in his letter to Henry VIII. He says, "The body of Christ is (the bread still existing) in the sacrament, as fire is in iron, the substance of the iron existing, and God in man the human nature existing—the substances in each case being so united, that each retains its own operation and proper nature, and yet they constitute one thing." The teaching of Luther, however, on the Eucharist . . . was not uniform, and he often expresses his views in a less objectionable manner than in the extract given. Luther's illustration, and the mode of the sacramental presence implied, has not been adopted by the Reformer's followers, nor is it found in the Lutheran confessions of faith. The Augsburg and other confessions . . . merely state the co-existence, after consecration of bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ.—*Ibid.*

[14300] Christians have ever regarded the Lord's Supper as . . . a most holy mystery, and have ever, in accordance with their Master's words, believed that they had therein His body and blood. Hence, the form of celebration in the ancient Church was for the clergyman to say, at delivering the elements to each individual: "The body of Christ," "The blood of Christ;" the receiver answering, Amen. And this is still the confession of the Church of Christ in all places. But in what sense, indeed, the sacrament is the body and blood of Christ is a matter of contention; and the feast of communion has become the signal of separation.—*Luthardt.*

[14301] Luther taught that bread and wine remain after consecration. This was a step in the right direction. He shrunk from going further; and, in accordance with prior conceptions, maintained that Christ is present in them also.—*Rev. David King, LL.D.*

[14302] The Lutherans dislike the name consubstantiation, and prefer to assert the real Presence without indicating its nature. It is enough, they think, to avow the fact, proffering no definition of the mode. But the assertion they make involves of itself contradiction and absurdity. Equally with the Romanists they suppose Christ to have been crucified, and not crucified when the ordinance was appointed. They suppose different material substances—the elements and Christ's body—to occupy the same place.—*Ibid.*

#### VII. THE PREPARATION REQUISITE FOR RECEPTION OF THIS SACRAMENT.

Of all who come to the Lord's Supper is required—self-examination, repentance, faith, and love.

[14303] That sacrament of our spiritual nourishment, which our Saviour, as His fare-

well, left us for a blessed memorial of His death and passion, can never be celebrated with enough of devotion. Far be it from us to come to this feast of our God in our common garments; the soul must be trimmed up if we would be meet guests for the Almighty. Due examination, therefore, comes in first, and thoroughly searches the soul, and finds out all the secret defilements that it hides within it; and by the aid of true penitence strips it of all those loathsome rags wherewith it was polluted. Sin may not be clothed upon with grace: Joshua's filthy garments must be plucked off ere he can be capable of precious robes.—*Bp. Hall.*

[14304] That partaking is unworthy (1 Cor. xi. 29) that occurs with an unbelieving, unholy mind, to which what is holy is indifferent, which makes no distinction between the sacred and the profane. Worthy, again, is the partaking that is entered upon and performed with a genuine heart's need to be renewed, namely, in the communion of the Lord and of the believing congregation, the partaking that takes place in *repentance* and *faith*, with which an honest purpose (vow) is always united. Above all, we seek in the celebration of the supper a sealing of the forgiveness of our sins, wherefore our fathers designated the resolve to go to the altar as the resolve that they would make their peace with their God, which meant, rightly understood, that they now anew obeyed the requirement, "Be ye reconciled unto God."—*Bp. Martensen.*

[14305] The Eucharist is especially the sacrament of faith. Ere our Lord's words could be received His hearers needed faith in the highest degree—an implicit, unwavering reliance upon God's word and power. Besides, for another reason, our Lord prominently urged the necessity of faith; it is through faith only that His blessed body and blood can be received; faith must open our eyes to behold Him, and draw us to Him in loving affection, thus inclining us to obey Him, and preparing us to receive Him as the nourishment of our souls.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[14306] Will ye know who receiveth unworthily? St. Paul saith, "He discerneth not the Lord's body;" that is, he putteth no difference between this bread and other, but eateth, like a child, the meat which he knoweth not; and after, the bread seemeth stones to him, and the wine poison, because his conscience telleth him that he hath received unworthily, before he could say like David, "My heart is prepared."—*H. Smith.*

[14307] This grace is thy spiritual taste, without which thou canst relish nothing on the table. This is the bucket, and if it be wanting, I may say to thee, as the Samaritan woman to Christ, "The well is deep, and thou hast nothing to draw with." This faith is the hand to receive Christ; this is as the arms whereby we em-



brace Christ. As loving friends that have been a long while asunder, when they meet together, press close in embracing each other in their arms; so the Christian who longeth to see Jesus Christ in the promises, when at a sacrament he meeteth Him, presses closely when embracing Him in the arms of faith.—*Swinnock*.

[14308] The Lord's Supper is a legacy of love. We shall only be able to understand it in proportion as we seek to understand what love is. The nature of love is to give itself. Hence we must see in it the love which communicates itself. This is the road which our thoughts must take if they would understand this holy mystery.—*Luthardt*.

[14309] See what love-fire thou hast for this love-feast. Dost thou love the brethren as brethren, because they are related to God, and because they have the image of God? Or dost thou love them only for the natural qualities in them, and their courtesy to thee? This fire I must tell thee is kitchen fire, which must be fed with such coarse fuel; the former only is the fire which is taken from God's altar. Dost thou love Christ in a cottage as well as in a court? Dost thou love a poor as well as a rich Christian? Dost thou love grace in rags as much as grace in robes? Is it their honour or their holiness which thou dost admire? Be it known unto thee that love—Divine love—is as essential to thee as a sceptre is to a monarch, or as gold is to a merchant.—*Swinnock*.

[14310] As wine makes glad the heart of man, so the love of God, the love of Christ, the love of man for God and men, makes glad the heart of those who come within its invigorating, enkindling influence. In that fierce war waged in the fifteenth century by the Bohemian nation in order to regain the use of the sacramental wine which the Roman Church had forbidden, when they recovered the use of it, the sacred cup or chalice was henceforth carried as a trophy in front of their armies. With them it was a mere pledge of their ecclesiastical triumph, a token of their national independence. But with us, when we turn from the outward thing to the thing signified, it is only too true that Catholics and Protestants alike have lost the cup from their communion feasts. If the blood of Christ, of which the sacred wine is the emblem, in itself signifies the self-denying, life-giving love of Christ, have not we often lost from our lives and our ordinances that which is the life of all Christian life and the wine of all Christian ordinances—namely, the love or charity “without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before God”? Whosoever regains that chalice, whosoever pours that new wine into our dead hearts, may well bear it as a trophy before the Christian armies. The ground on which the Roman Church withheld the literal wine from all but the officiating priest was the scruple lest the material liquid might possibly be spilled. Our ground for insisting

on the cup for the laity ought to be that the Divine charity of which the cup of the communion is the emblem belongs to the whole Church. To recover that holy cup, that real life-blood of the Redeemer, is a quest worthy of all the chivalry of our time, worthy of all the courage of Lancelot, worthy of all the purity of Galahad.—*Dean Stanley*.

#### VIII. ITS ANCIENT TYPES.

[14311] There are in the Old Testament thirteen types and umbrages of this holy sacrament; eleven of them are of meat and drink: such are—the tree of life in the midst of Paradise—the bread and wine of Melchisedec—the fine meal that Sarah kneaded for the angels' entertainment—the manna—the roasted Paschal lamb—the springing rock—the bread of proposition to be eaten by the priests—the barley cake in the host of Midian—Samson's father's oblation upon the rock—the honeycomb that opened the eyes of Jonathan—and the bread which the angel brought to Elijah, in the strength of which he was to live forty days: all this to show that the sacrament is the life of the spiritual man, the food of his soul, the light of his eyes, and the strength of his heart.—*Bp. Taylor*.

#### IX. ITS SOLEMN OBLIGATIONS.

[14312] We cannot embrace His cross, and yet refuse our own. We cannot raise the cup of His remembrance to our lips, without a secret pledge to Him, to one another, to the great company of the faithful in every age that we, too, hold ourselves at God's disposal, that we will ask nothing on our own account, that we will pass simply into the Divine hand to take us whither it will.—*James Martineau*.

[14313] Whoever does not come to the Lord's Supper with a view of being hereby excited, engaged, and assisted to lead a holy and a Christian life, but thinking that this ordinance will supply the place of it, and that by keeping this commandment of his Lord and Saviour he shall make some atonement and satisfaction for his breaking of others, has a very wrong notion of this sacrament, and, instead of receiving any benefit from it, is likely to be much the worse for it.—*H. Grove*.

[14314] We are to celebrate the Lord's Supper as a solemn and public memorial of the great deliverance which our blessed Lord has wrought for us, and to declare to all the world thereby what a sense we have of His infinite love and mercy to us. If we are indeed so sensible, as we ought to be, of our Saviour's love in thus giving Himself to the death for us; if we have so seriously weighed, as becomes those who are called to the feast, the mighty benefits and advantages which are derived to us thereby, what misery we have escaped, and to what blessings we are entitled by His suffer-

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ings—the sense of all this will soon teach us what motions and affections ought to fill our souls, that may be suitable to so great and blessed a memorial.—*Abb. Wake.*

[14315] You are the Lord's guests, and the Lord Himself is your feast; and this feast is before you, the holiest meat that ever ye did eat, and the comfortablest meat that ever you did eat, and the dangerousest meat that ever you did eat. You stand upon life or death; you eat to salvation or damnation: there is nothing in this world which you can receive with greater benefit, or with greater peril. Adam did not eat the forbidden fruit with greater danger; Adam could not taste the tree of life with greater fruit than you may taste and receive this sacrament.—*H. Smith.*

#### X. ITS SINFUL AND DANGEROUS NEGLECT.

[14316] He that remembers not Christ's death, so as to endeavour to be like Him, forgets the end of His redemption, and dishonours the cross on which his satisfaction was wrought.—*Horneck.*

[14317] Your Saviour directs you, and His ministers invite you, to frequent His table. They say again and again, "Come: for all things are now ready." But if you are living in the neglect of this ordinance, you greatly resemble those who first rejected the gospel. They "with one consent began to make excuse;" and it was said of them, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper." The soul was to be cut off, and the man was to bear his sin, that neglected to eat the passover (Numb. ix. 13). Have you not reason to fear that a neglect of the Lord's Supper will be attended with a similar danger?—*E. Lickersteth, M.A.*

[14318] He is no true follower of a crucified Master who does not deem it his highest privilege as well as unquestionable duty to obey the direct command, "Do this." Neither is he a loyal member of the Church of God, nor faithful "steward" of the Divine "mysteries," who dares to slight even though it be through fear of "over-estimating" an ordinance of that Church's Head, instituted to be upheld and *practically*, no less than *theoretically*, honoured throughout all succeeding ages.—*A. M. A. W.*

[14319] To the negligent in this matter very weighty words are addressed by the Church of England: "Take ye heed, lest ye, withdrawing yourselves from this Holy Supper, provoke God's indignation against you. . . . Consider with yourselves how great injury ye do unto God, and how sore punishment hangeth over your heads for the same."—*Ibid.*

[14320] "I am not worthy," "not good enough," an excuse either arising from the consciousness of living in some known sin, or a

mistaken notion of what is required in those who come to the table of the Lord. In the first case the reason may be true, but the answer is self-evident. Why continue to live in such a state? Will the allowance of any sin make the neglect of the Lord's Supper less sinful? In the other case the excuse may arise from ignorance, or from a latent spirit of self-righteousness. Surely no man can think himself "worthy," if that means to be free from any and all sin! Were the apostles, who first received it from the Lord Himself, in this sense worthy? Was St. Paul? To feel we are in ourselves unworthy is one of the most essential requisites to come to Christ.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

#### XI. ITS INESTIMABLE BENEFITS.

[14321] The Lord's Supper is the meal of our pilgrimage. When we are tired, when we feel our weakness, when the comfort of forgiveness vanishes, when our faith grows weak, and our hope faint, then let us come to this feast, then let us obtain strength and refreshment, then let the body and blood of Christ assure us that our sins are forgiven and our eternal life certain. For this purpose let us, as we eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, show forth His death till He come. His death is our comfort, His coming our hope.—*Luthardt.*

[14322] Possibly we must needs go at once from the passover chamber to the garden; and he that is without a "sword" will do well to "sell his garment" and buy one. But in the strength of this celestial manna, and with the music of the *Hallel* hymn still lingering in our ears, we shall be of good courage, and shall not be overcome of the Evil One. We shall go without the camp bearing the Lord's reproach, and shall look joyfully and patiently for the city of immovable foundations.—*J. D. Geden.*

[14323] Here we often, like Moses from Mount Pisgah, get extended views of the promised land. Here the mourning saints find joy, the weary rest, the dejected encouragement, and the strong increasing confidence. Here the spirit of faith applies the atonement, and the sense of reconciliation fills our souls with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Christ intends His people should be comforted, should abound in all spiritual joy, and come to a feast, where gladness is sown for the upright in heart.—*Harveys.*

[14324] Christ has given us, not only the ritual of an ordinance, but the pattern for our lives, when He took the cup, and gave thanks. So common joys become sacraments, enjoyment becomes worship, and the cup which holds the bitter or the sweet skilfully mingled for our lives becomes the cup of blessing and salvation drank in remembrance of Him.—*Alex. Mac-laren, D.D.*

[14325] The communion of the Lord's Supper

is meant to be a sample of, and not an exception to, our common days : and in the rite there lies a mighty power to make the whole of the rest of life like itself.—*Ibid.*

[14326] Come here and see the victories of the cross. Christ's wounds are thy healing, His agonies thy repose, His conquests thy conflicts, His groans thy songs, His pains thine ease, His shame thy glory, His death thy life, His sufferings thy salvation.—*E. Bickersteth, M.A.*

[14327] This sacrament is a glass for the mind, a monument for the memory, a support of faith, a provocation to love, a quickening to obedience, and a signet-seal of all the mercies of God in Jesus Christ.—*Usher.*

[14328] A heart-memory is better than a mere head-memory. Better to carry away a little of the love of Christ in our souls, than if we were able to repeat every word of every sermon we ever heard.—*Francis de Sales.*

[14329] The due attendance on this means of grace will be accompanied by a manifest growth in humility, delighting in God, and doing good. Our spirit will become more meek, and tender, and heavenly. Just as when a sick man, through taking a medicine exactly suited to his disease, begins to recover from his disorder ; his appetite returns, his recently enervated limbs are renewed with fresh strength, his lately pallid cheeks catch again the glow of health, he moves about afresh with freedom, and goes to his work with alacrity and vigour, feeling more than ever the blessings of health, from having been confined to his habitation and his sick room : so, when at the Lord's table we receive "the healthful spirit of God's grace," we hunger and thirst after righteousness ; we are raised up to new vigour in the spiritual life, we walk again with God, and go to our daily duties with fresh zeal and devotion.—*E. Bickersteth, M.A.*

[14330] It is not the Christian life—nor a substitute for faith and holiness—but it is its most enlivening exercise, and most powerful support. It is not the exercise of one grace, but of all—the culminating point, where all the virtues which we derive from the Redeemer's fulness—faith, hope, and charity—all meet in one holy band—plain enough to speak, better than any eloquence, even to the lowest and simplest—rich and deep enough for the greatest and wisest of men, and full of blessings for both.—*J. Garbett, M.A.*

[14331] Rightly considered, there is no language which can be too elevated in speaking of the holy Eucharist ; too much feeling there cannot be where the love is inconceivable, and the mercies infinite—too much faith there cannot be when there are such evidences of love—too much awe and reverence is impossible where God, the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost, is

amongst us, blessing us, and filling our hearts with heavenly joy—too lofty a strain for such a theme the human heart cannot conceive, nor human lips pour forth, when angels and arch-angels may be joining in the song—blessing God and saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high."—*Ibid.*

[14332] Too soon we rise ; the symbols disappear ;

The feast, though not the love, is passed and gone ;

The bread and wine remove, but Thou art here ;  
Nearer than ever ; still my Shield and Sun !

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by ;

Yet passing, points to the glad feast above,  
Giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy—

The Lamb's great bridal feast of bliss and love !—*Dr. Bonar.*

## XII. ITS FREQUENT PROFANATION.

[14333] We are not in danger now of those tumultuous and irregular practices which prevailed at Corinth ; but is there not, in the minds of some, a want of reverence and holy awe ? Do we not sometimes come in a light and careless frame of mind, if not with an impenitent heart ? As there is danger on one side of an excess of fear destroying the love and freedom of the child, so there is on the other of failing in that due reverence, which is so suited to the state of sinful and dependent creatures, in all their dealings with their great Creator.—*E. Bickersteth, M.A.*

[14334] Ask yourselves with what view you approach this table. Is it that you may strengthen and refresh your souls ? Is it that you may nourish the spiritual life within ? Is it that you may hold nearer communion with God, and realize a more intimate union with your Saviour ? Is it that you may give the greater diligence to make your calling and election sure ? If it be so, why not come oftener ? If it be not so, why come at all ? I see not how you can escape from this dilemma ; you must be either denying yourselves a Christian privilege often, or profaning a holy ordinance sometimes.—*Doddsworth.*

[14335] The subject of frequent communion was handled in a specially instructive way in the controversy of the 17th century between the Jesuits and the Jansenists. The Jesuits recommended frequently repeated confession and communion, by which they furnished many worldlings with a convenient means of getting rid very often and ever anew of a guilty conscience, which they were ever afresh contracting. A Jesuit published a treatise on the question, whether it is better to communicate seldom or often, and declared for the last, at the same time viewing the matter quite externally and in a business way, while giving the advice to communicate every eighth day. In



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the world of rank there then prevailed a great levity, especially, too, in the partaking of the sacrament, as, for instance, with a Princess Guemené, who wanted, when on her way to a ball, and in her ball dress, to make her confession *on passage*, but was sent away by the priest concerned. A most this indecency, Pascal's friend, Arnauld, wrote his celebrated work, "*De la Fréquente Communion*." Though we cannot enter upon his Catholic views, we must entirely agree with him when he urges the point of view that the Holy Supper requires the most earnest preparation, and that one dare not take it easy with this matter; that a certain reserve may here be of use, in order that our hunger may grow; nay, that in many there is found even an unhealthy kind of hunger.—*Ep. Martensen*.

### XIII. ITS POSITION AS A SACRAMENT.

[14336] Does any one ask now what is the rightful position of the Lord's Supper? I answer that question without any hesitation. I believe its rightful position, like that of holiness, is between grace and glory—between justification and heaven—between faith and paradise—between conversion and the final rest—between the wicket-gate and the celestial city.—*Bp. Ryde*.

[14337] This sacrament is not Christ; it is not conversion; it is not a passport to heaven. It is for the strengthening and refreshing of those who have come to Christ already, who know something of conversion, who are already in the narrow way, and have fled from the city of destruction. . . . Higher than this we must not place the ordinance. . . . Lower than this we have no right to place it.—*Ibid.*

[14338] Christians have ever regarded the Lord's Supper as the highest of all transactions. . . . It is that most sacred of all acts of the Christian Church—an act which our thoughts cannot approach without awe.—*Lutherdlt.*

## 5

### CONFIRMATION.

#### I. THE (ALLEGED) COMPARATIVELY MODERN USAGE OF THE ORDINANCE.

[14339] The renewal of the baptismal vows, edifying and advantageous though it be, was introduced first into the English Office Book at the last revision in 1662, and has no place in any other known office book. Before that time the bishop was directed to test the children publicly in the catechism, in which they had been previously publicly instructed. If therefore confirmation be the subjective acceptance of their position by young Christians, it is a ceremony peculiar to the modern English Church: and even in the Church of England it is an usage

only two hundred years old, and, though a suitable and laudable ceremony, a merely human institution.—*Church Quarterly Review*.

#### II. ITS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY.

[14340] There is no verbal institution of this rite by our Lord; but the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him immediately after His baptism (Matt. iii. 16) was a typical act in which He was "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts iv. 27, x. 38; John vi. 27), which associates His person with the subsequent administration of the rite; and the imposition of His hands on the children brought to Him (Matt. xix. 15) may be justly regarded as an exemplary, if not a mandatory, act. But whether these are or are not to be regarded as constituting a precept for the Church to follow, it is evident that the apostles used the rite with a promptness and straightforwardness which point to some Divine command as to what they were doing.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology*.

[14341] Among the earliest acts of the apostles we read of St. Peter and St. John going down to Samaria to lay their hands on those who had been baptized by the deacon Philip (Acts viii. 14-17); and in the early ministry of St. Paul we see him laying his hands upon the Ephesian disciples of St. John the Baptist as soon as they had been baptized with the baptism of Christ (Acts xix. 6). In both these cases the gift bestowed was accompanied with extraordinary spiritual powers, but the administration of it clearly had relation to the preceding baptism, and these powers were a special addition to the ordinary gift.—*Ibid.*

[14342] In the latter portions of the New Testament there are frequent references to the practice of laying on of hands. Thus, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it comes in immediately after baptism. "The doctrine of baptism, and of the laying on of hands," as *της ἀρχῆς* of Christian doctrine (Heb. vi. 2). Elsewhere St. Paul writes to the Ephesians that they had been "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance (Eph. i. 13, 14), after they had believed in Christ; he exhorts them not to grieve the Holy Spirit by which they had been "sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30); and in similar terms writes to the Corinthians of confirmation (*ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἀσπάζεται*) and anointing in Christ, by God, who has sealed them (2 Cor. i. 2), and the "foundation" and "seal" of 2 Tim. ii. 19 appear to be references to the same rite and its results. Of a similar character are St. John's references to an anointing which Christians had received (1 John ii. 20, 27), by which they had received spiritual illumination from Him of whom our Lord had said to the preceding generation, "He shall teach you all things" (John xiv. 26).—*Ibid.*

[14343] In reply to certain questions concerning confirmation, among others, whether

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confirmation be instituted by Christ, Cranmer (1540) replied that there is no place in Scripture that declareth this sacrament to be instituted of Christ. (1) The places alleged for the same were acts and deeds of the apostles. (2) These acts were done by a special gift given to the apostles for the confirmation of God's word at that time. (3) The said special gift doth not now remain with the successors of the apostles.—*Cranmer*.

### III. ITS CONNECTION WITH BAPTISM IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

[14344] Confirmation in connection with baptism may be traced to the time of Tertullian, who informs us that the ceremony of unction and the imposition of hands followed immediately after baptism. Cyprian refers to the subject of confirmation, and applies to it the word sacramentum; but it is evident from the use of the term at the time in which he wrote, and from the scope of the passages in which it occurs, that sacramentum was not used in its strictly theological meaning, but simply in the sense of ceremony. Numerous references to later writers might be made to show the connection of baptism and confirmation. The baptism, of adults being regarded as a solemn compact or covenant, confirmation followed as the seal by which the contract was ratified; and hence confirmation was administered, not by the person officiating, but by the bishop.—*Encyclopædia (McClintock and Strong)*.

[14345] Even after the general introduction of infant baptism, confirmation immediately succeeded. In the Oriental churches baptism, confirmation, and the Lord's Supper are administered in immediate succession; a probable evidence that such was the ancient custom. The permanent separation of baptism from confirmation is generally traced to the thirteenth century.—*Ibid*.

### IV. ANCIENT AND MODERN MODE OF ADMINISTRATION.

[14346] The earliest confirmation offices belong to an age not very far removed from the time of Cyril, being found in the Sacramentaries of Gelasius (A.D. 472) and St. Gregory (A.D. 590). One of the Anglican rites, used in the Church of York, belongs to a little later age, about A.D. 700. In these formularies there is a substantial agreement with that of our modern Prayer Book, though the latter is much curtailed, and the use of chrism was not provided for in the English formulary.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology*.

[14347] The English Church has dropped the use of chrism, but has intensified the other portion of the rite, requiring the bishop to lay his hands on the head of each person confirmed, instead of spreading them out towards the whole number, as in the Roman practice.—*Ibid*.

[14348] The bishop was for the most part the ordinary minister. Several canons deny to the other orders of the clergy the right of confirming; but presbyters appear to have conferred imposition of hands, (a) in the absence of the bishop, or (b) in the presence of the bishop, only by his express orders, or (c) on the conversion of a reputed heretic, if such a one, desirous of being received into the Church, was at the point of death while the bishop was absent. Deacons were on an equality with presbyters in this respect, until they were absolutely forbidden to administer this rite by the Council of Toledo, A.D. 400.—*Encyclopædia (McClintock and Strong)*.

### V. ITS PRIMARY INTENTIONS.

[14349] Turning to the order of confirmation, we find the nature and object of that rite there stated to be simply this:—First, that "children, being come to the years of discretion, and having learned what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in baptism, they may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the church, ratify and confirm the same." Secondly, that having thus "acknowledged themselves bound to believe and to do all those things which their godfathers and godmothers then undertook for them," they may "promise that, by the grace of God, they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things as they, by their own confession, have assented to." And, thirdly, that having thus adopted and renewed their baptismal vow, they may receive the assurance of God's favour, and the communication of God's Holy Spirit, to encourage and enable them to fulfil the same. A public Recognition of our baptismal vow—a public Dedication of ourselves to fulfil that vow—and a public Reception of Divine encouragement and grace to accomplish that fulfilment; these are the purposes for which confirmation is ordained.—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

### VI. ITS DESIRABILITY AND VALUE.

1 As a complement of baptism and an introduction to the Lord's Supper.

[14350] In infant baptism the profession of the child's faith, requisite for the act of covenanting with God, has been made by a surety. In laying claim, therefore, to the personal benefit of the Christian covenant, there must be a credible personal profession of the terms of that covenant. The sponsorial profession was sufficient for the infant covenant; but for a personal covenant, a personal profession is indispensable; and without it the infant title to Church privileges must be considered, in the case of an adult, to be invalidated. In the covenant of baptism, the infant was passive; and indeed was received into the Church, not on its own account, but having, as a part of its parent, a covenant interest in the promises to

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the seed of believers. But, in the adult covenant, personal obligations are involved, and personal graces called into exercise; and hence arises the necessity of a personal profession, as a visible investiture into the Church privileges of the covenant. The profession made at the Eucharist by no means answers this design, being connected with high privileges, consequent upon the validity of his title, as a complete member of the visible Church.—*Bridges*.

[14351] Confirmation commends itself to us as a matter of propriety and fitness. So much so, that wherever infant baptism is practised, some method of personal and conscious recognition of our baptismal obligations, at a maturer age, is felt to be almost essential to the full completion of that rite. And hence the requisition that is made by some denominations of a statement of experience, to be examined and approved by the society, before young persons can be admitted into full communion, and accounted members of the Church.—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

[14352] The rite of confirmation, which looks back to the sacrament of baptism, and is perfective thereof, looks forward to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and is introductory thereto. It seals to you personally the privileges of the former, and thereby gives you right and title to the privileges of the latter.—*Ibid.*

[14353] We follow baptism by confirmation, not to complete baptism, for it is complete already; not to renew it, for it is a beginning once for all; but that the baptized may express with his own mouth that confession of faith upon which he was baptized, that his covenant with God in baptism may be the covenant of his conscious choice, and that he may receive a blessing at the very time of his moral development and his moral danger.—*Luthardt*.

#### 2 As a religious rite of solemn significance.

[14354] It is a most solemn and important ordinance, for four reasons: First, because there was a like ceremony in the Jewish Church. At the age of thirteen, Jewish children were brought to the temple to be publicly examined; and, if approved, they were then declared to be "the children of the precept"—a name given to them for their making a solemn promise to observe the precepts and laws of Moses. Secondly, because this kind of confirmation was practised by the apostles. In Acts viii. 14–17, and xxi. 5, 6, we are told that they laid their hands on those who had been baptized, in order that they might receive some further gifts of God's grace, and be more fully strengthened by His Holy Spirit. Thirdly, because we learn that after the death of the apostles the ordinance of confirmation was observed; and those who had been baptized were afterwards confirmed. Fourthly, because it is indeed a most useful and profitable ordinance, having proved a blessing to thousands; and, therefore, one which the

Church might well recommend for the benefit of her children.—*Bp. Oxenden*.

[14355] The rite of confirmation is not only a public ratification of our baptismal vow, but a public introduction of the recipient into full connection with the Church, of which he had hitherto been a catechumen, and then becomes a voluntary and deliberate member. It draws forth, therefore, not only the thoughts of the mind towards the consideration of our baptismal obligations, and the determinations of the will towards their fulfilment; but the feelings of the heart, both towards Him to whom we therein dedicate ourselves, and also towards the Society, or Church, with which we thereby enter into full connection.—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

[14356] It affords the opportunity to every opening mind to pause upon the threshold of active life, to recollect the character which has been stamped upon us in our infancy, and intelligently and deliberately to adopt that character for our own. It brings the youth of our congregations into personal contact with their minister, just at the time when they are most susceptible of friendly and affectionate advice. It enables them to open out the thoughts and feelings which may have already begun to stir within them in secret. It wins their confidence towards an intelligent guide, who can direct their inexperienced minds, and preserve them from the errors of youthful enthusiasm. It institutes a connection and communication, of which they will be ready to avail themselves in after-seasons of perplexity, of sorrow, or of temptation. It develops in them the first feelings of social piety, and awakens interest for the general welfare of the Church of which they are members.—*Ibid.*

[14357] Confirmation is an ordination to that Christian priesthood of which St. Peter speaks (1 Peter ii. 9), . . . an establishing and strengthening of the Christian, . . . a resettlement of him in the body of Christ, the sending him forth armed to the warfare for which he was destined at the first, the enrolment of him as an adult servant of Jesus Christ, arrived at full competency for responsibility.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology*.

#### VII. DOCTRINE OF THE ROMAN AND GREEK CHURCHES RESPECTING CONFIRMATION.

[14358] Confirmation is a sacrament in the Romish and Greek Churches. In the Greek Church confirmation is administered at the same time with, or as soon as possible after, baptism, even in the case of infants, it being considered perilous to die without it; and in the Latin Church also, it is often administered to young children—the Church of Rome not considering a person a "complete Christian" till he has partaken of this "sacrament." To reconcile this opinion with the salvation of children



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who die after baptism, but before confirmation, or "committing actual sin," the Church of Rome has decided that they are confirmed by death, as they cannot sin afterwards.—*Encyclopædia (McClintock and Strong)*.

#### VIII. ANGLICAN HIGH AND LOW CHURCH VIEWS.

[14359] The Canonists . . . of the English Church generally, incline to a tender age for confirmation. Thus, in reply to Bucer, who "finds fault with our Church for administering confirmation too soon," and says that none ought to be confirmed "who have not had opportunity of giving sufficient testimonies of their faith and desire of living to God by their life and conversation," Wheatley argues that confirmation is administered "to assist them in manifesting their faith and practice, and is not to be deferred till these are already manifested." "The rite," he says, "is to guard them against sin, before they are exposed to temptation," that so the Holy Spirit may take early possession of their youthful hearts, and prevent those sins to which, without His assistance, the very tenderness of their age would be apt to expose them.—*Ibid*.

[14360] The High and Low Church differ as to the essence of confirmation, the latter regarding it as being essentially a personal renewal of the promises made in the name of the subject by others at baptism; while the High Churchmen look upon it as a kind of sacramental rite for conveying the strengthening power of the Holy Ghost. Some High Churchmen have therefore maintained that the Roman doctrine of the sacramental character of confirmation may, in some sense, be accepted by the Anglican Church.—*Ibid*.

#### IX. HOMILETICAL REMARKS.

It is most important that a circumspect and holy life should be the outcome of this ordinance.

[14361] An increased influence would follow upon individuals if they were taught to look forward to confirmation as at the end of years, and as consummating a probation, before it admits to privileges. And by the more cautious administration of this rite, churches would be spared the discredit which now falls upon them and upon the Christian religion itself, when few out of the numbers, thus certified as approved members, present themselves, when become really masters of their own acts, to the solemnities of the Eucharist, whereto they have become formally entitled; when they throw contempt, out of mere ignorance and heedlessness, upon the communion which has been too prodigal of its privileges; passing out of it, as if they owed nothing to it; above all, showing that their Church was premature in declaring them confirmed Christian soldiers, by the headstrong,

worldly, and selfish lives which they lead.—*H. B. Wilson, B.D.*

[14362] What strange beings we are sometimes! We surround children with the most tender and assiduous care up to the time of confirmation, and then, at the most critical age, when their passions begin to cross them, we launch them forth, without support and counterpoise, into a pestilential atmosphere, and then wonder why they do not persevere in the right path.—*Abbé Mullois*.

[14363] It is a valuable opportunity for pausing in the career of life—for taking breath, as it were, before you begin again, reviewing the past, and considering the future. A few years ago, and you were not: a few more, and on this stage of life you will be no more. Much has been done, much is yet to be done in the interval. Deep life is beginning.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson*.

### 6

## HOLY ORDERS.

### I. NATURE OF ORDINATION.

#### Its Scriptural import.

[14364] Scripture represents ordination to be the setting apart of a person to the holy ministry, by the authority of Jesus Himself acting by the medium of men in office; and this solemn investing act is necessary to his being lawfully accounted a minister of Christ.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards)*.

### II. WITNESS OF ANCIENT WRITERS TO THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH MINISTRY.

[14365] There is no ancient ecclesiastical writer extant who does not speak of certain individuals as bishops of particular churches; for instance, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch; Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna: or who mentions as contemporary with them in their particular churches any other bishops. This uniformity is not to be explained but on the principle that there was in each of those churches some one individual supreme in the powers of ordination and government on whom was bestowed the title of bishop.—*Ibid*.

[14366] The ministry is of Divine constitution in the three orders of bishop, priest, and deacons. The government of the Church is of human regulation, susceptible of such regulations as circumstances may render advisable. A challenge from the matchless Hooker has remained two hundred years unanswered: "We require you to find out but one church upon the face of the whole earth that hath not been ordered by episcopal regiment since the time that the blessed apostles were here conversant." And though departures from it (says Bishop Doane) since the time of which he spoke have been but too frequent and too great, "episcopal regi-

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ment" is still maintained as Christ's ordinance for the perpetuation and government of His Church, and is received as such by eleven-twelfths of the whole Christian world.—*Ibid.*

### III. THE AUTHORITY FOR ORDINATION AND ESSENTIAL NECESSITY, FROM A HIGH CHURCH STANDPOINT, OF ITS EPISCOPAL ADMINISTRATION.

#### 1 Viewed as the teaching of the Bible.

[14367] Those ten days when the apostles had not their Master visibly amongst them, and when neither had they received the promise of the Father, were selected as most appropriate for a transaction in which the rising Church had the deepest possible interest. And may we not suppose that this was ordered with a view to the instruction of more remote times? If Christ had Himself appointed the successor to Judas, it might have been said that the apostles were not competent to communicate their authority; and that we were not therefore bound to recognize in those whom they set over the Church, rulers possessed of a commission from God. If, on the other hand, the apostles had not proceeded to the election, until they had obtained the miraculous gift of the Spirit, it might have been urged, that they acted solely in virtue of their supernatural endowments; and that, therefore, when such endowments were withdrawn from the Church, there was no longer any power of appointing successors. But the very singular fact, that the election of Matthias was made to fall just when it seemed least likely to fail—when the apostles were more alone than at any other time—more in our own case, with Christ in heaven, and the Spirit present only in His ordinary influences—this fact sets itself decisively against both insinuations, and seems to establish almost beyond controversy, that the practice of the apostles is binding on the Church; and that in what they did in the appointment of overseers of the flock, they did only that in which they might be followed by those overseers themselves; so that there might be a regular transmission of authority from their day even to our own.—*H. Melvill, B.D.*

[14368] Holy Scripture evidently teaches us that before the coming of Christ it was the will of God that sacred offices should be performed by a regular ministry, consisting of priests and other ministers, and acting under Divine authority and inspiration. It is also certain that He was accustomed to punish with fearful severity all who attempted to assume these offices without such Divine appointment. But what was the will of Christ with reference to the Christian ministry? Did He intend that it should be held less sacred than the Jewish priesthood? Let us consider how He gave His commission to the apostles. In the evening of the day on which He rose from the dead He said to them, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this He breathed on them, and saith unto

them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John xx. 21, 22). Yet they did not at once enter upon their work. Later on He gave them the commission, "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." But even then they did not begin to exercise their ministry, because He had further said to them, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 49). Hence He intended them to understand that He had committed to them certain extraordinary spiritual powers, and that they must not venture to use those powers until He had given them full and visible commission, and abundant inspiration by the outpouring of His Spirit.—*Rev. D. J. White, M.A.*

[14369] St. Matthias became one of the apostles, possessed of the same authority and spiritual powers with the others. This was so because he had been duly authorized by them, although he was not chosen by Christ while visibly present upon earth. This was the first ordination in the Christian Church after the ascension of Christ. It differed from subsequent ordinations in some respects, because the Holy Ghost had not yet descended. For example, there is no mention of "laying on of hands," probably because they could not by that means confer any spiritual gifts until they were themselves "filled with the Holy Ghost." But we have a very clear description of an ordination in the 13th chapter of the Acts. It is there related that "there were in the Church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers." Among the names mentioned are those of Barnabas and Saul. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Hence we see that although these disciples had hitherto filled the ancient offices of "teachers" and "prophets," they needed regular ordination before they could enter upon their future work as apostles. To use the words of Bishop Wordsworth in his commentary on this passage:—"Although St. Paul had received visions and revelations of the Lord, yet ordination and mission by the public authority of the Church to qualify him for the apostolic office was not dispensed with in his case, but was especially enjoined by the Holy Spirit, who did *not* say, 'I have separated them,' but 'do ye separate them for Me.'" Surely this is a remarkable proof of the necessity for ordination. St. Paul had been miraculously converted several years before he had given and received many proofs of his fitness for the ministry, and yet it was required that he should be regularly ordained. Moreover, we should be careful to notice the manner in which this ordination was effected, because it appears to have been given as a specimen of the mode of all other appointments to the ministry. First the apostles "fasted," then they "prayed," and then "they laid their hands on them." After this regular ordination,

and not before, it could be said of them that they were "sent forth by the Holy Ghost" to their sacred work.—*Ibid.*

[14370] With reference to ordination, the apostles taught that by laying on of hands they conferred upon others the gifts of the Spirit which they themselves possessed. This is plainly shown us by the words of St. Paul, addressed to Timothy (Bishop of Ephesus): "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. iv. 14). Again, in his second epistle to the same bishop, he writes: "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands." We see, then, that St. Paul reminds Timothy of the spiritual gifts which he received at his ordination, and distinctly asserts that these gifts were bestowed by means of the laying on of hands.—*Ibid.*

[14371] The teaching of the apostles is that persons ordained as bishops by them should, in their turn, confer holy orders upon others. Hence in writing to Titus (Bishop of Crete), St. Paul says, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus i. 5), and they also taught that none were to be permitted to assume ministerial offices without due ordination, as in Heb. v. 4. In this passage it is clearly laid down as a principle of the Christian ministry that men must be outwardly called thereto, just as Aaron was outwardly called to the Jewish priesthood. In a similar manner St. Jude, in condemning the false teachers of his time, pronounces a "woe" against them for following the example of Korah, and compares their sin to "the gainsaying of Core."—*Ibid.*

## 2 Viewed as the teaching of the Church.

[14372] 1. The Church does not overlook the importance of the "inward call" to the ministry. Therefore she puts to candidates for the priesthood the question, "Do you think in your heart that you be truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . to the order and ministry of the priesthood?" And the candidate answers, "I think it." 2. Nevertheless, the Church insists that regular ordination (with imposition of hands and use of the Ordinal) is necessary in order to give authority and power for the work of the ministry. In the Preface to the Ordinal she recognizes the existence of a three-fold ministry from the time of the apostles, and declares that Holy Scripture and the "ancient authors" plainly prove this fact. Moreover, in the same Preface it is laid down as a principle that "no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful bishop, priest, or deacon in the Church of England, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had formerly episcopal consecration or ordination." Hence the Church of England distinctly

asserts that regular ordinations before the Reformation were valid, and that none should hereafter be accounted so without the use of a similar form. 3. Further, the Church teaches that the necessary gifts of the Spirit are bestowed by means of the imposition of hands, and not by virtue of the inward call. Therefore when the bishop lays his hand on the candidate for the priesthood he says—"Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands." 4. Lastly, the Church teaches that the powers of the priesthood do not depend upon the holiness of life of the persons who are ordained. The 26th Article explains this briefly and clearly in the following words concerning unworthy ministers:—"The effect of Christ's ordinance is not taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men." It is, of course, true that the wilful sins of a priest are more grievous than those of a layman, because of the holy office which he fills. But, at the same time, we may be sure that while he will suffer for his own faults, the gifts of God which are administered by him are still effectual for the good of souls.—*Ibid.*

[14373] We may sum up the teaching of the Church on this subject thus: That while some Christians have ignored the necessity for regular ordination, the Church of England has never done so; that she distinctly teaches that the Holy Ghost is given by imposition of hands; and that the gifts of the Spirit for the work of the ministry depend upon the power of God, and not upon the imperfect goodness or faith of man.—*Ibid.*

## 3 Viewed as the teaching of common sense.

[14374] (1) Common sense certainly teaches us that if a man would exercise official duties he must have authority for his acts. Suppose, for example, the case of a person wishing to act towards you as a legal officer, either to enforce some penalty of the law, or to confer upon you some property or power. As a wise man you would question him as to his authority before you consented to submit to the penalty or receive the gift. If he failed to produce such authority, you would be right and wise in refusing to have any dealings with him.

(2) Common sense teaches us that authority must be given by some one who has himself been authorized. Suppose that in a case such as that which we have imagined the person wishing to act in the name of the law were to produce a warrant signed by a person whom you knew to be himself unauthorized. You would be justified in saying, "This is so much waste paper; the person who signed it had no authority." It would be quite useless for him to reply, "Yes; but he is a very good man, and in fact a much better and wiser man



than many who have such authority." Of course you would answer that his goodness and wisdom had nothing to do with the matter, since these qualities could not give him authority or power.

[14375] Acting on the principle of common sense, the Churchman says, "I do not doubt the goodness or earnestness of many who act as Christian ministers without authority; I only know that they have never received God's commission to perform sacred offices, and therefore I cannot accept their ministrations." It would be quite useless for any one to answer that such persons have some kind of authority given them by members of the sect to which they belong. The Churchman would be ready with the reply that those who professed to give such commission had not the power or authority to do so. This is made more clear when we trace back the authority of ministers who are outside the Church to the source from whence it was derived. We always find that it originated with some man who had himself been guilty of schism; that is to say, with one who had cut himself off from communion with the Church of Christ. Now, many people can understand at once that such a person has no right or power to appoint another to act as a Christian minister. But, at the same time, they seem to imagine that if he does so, and the same sort of ordination is repeated several times, then the persons so ordained are rightly appointed. But here common sense comes in as our teacher, and reminds us that repetition of an invalid act cannot make it valid. It would be absurd to suppose that a wrong action will become right if it is only repeated a number of times. No one imagines that an act of sin becomes less sinful if it is frequently performed. Just so, it is evident that if the first of a series of ordinations is a false one, those which follow are the same. Therefore, if our clergy did not derive their authority by regular succession from the apostles, and through them from Christ Himself, their claim to a Divine commission would be opposed to the teaching of common sense.—*Ibid.*

#### IV. POPULAR MEANING OF THE WORD PRIEST: ITS ETYMOLOGICAL AND ANALOGICAL USE.

The word priest, as used in the Church of England, is not employed in any sacrificial sense.

[14376] I would not willingly offend their ears to whom the name of priesthood is odious, though without cause. . . . Concerning popular use of words, that which the wisdom of their inventors did intend thereby is not commonly thought of, but by the name the thing altogether conceived in gross, as may appear in that if you ask of the common sort what any certain word, for example, what a priest doth signify, their manner is not to answer, a priest is a clergyman which offereth sacrifice to God, but they

show some particular person whom they use to call by that name. And if we list to descend to grammar, we are told by masters in those schools that the word "priest" hath his right place "in him whose mere function or charge is the service of God." Howbeit, because the most eminent part both of heathenish and Jewish service did consist in sacrifice, when learned men declare what the word *priest* doth properly signify, according to the mind of the first imposer of that name, their ordinary scholies do well expound it to imply sacrifice. Seeing, then, that sacrifice is now no part of the Church ministry, how should the name of priesthood be thereunto rightly applied? Surely, even as St. Paul applyeth the name of flesh (1 Cor. xv. 39) unto that very substance of fishes which hath a proportionable correspondence to flesh, although it be in nature another thing.—*Hooker.*

[14377] The fathers of the Church of Christ, with security of speech, call usually the ministry of the gospel *priesthood* in regard of that which the gospel hath made *proportionable* to ancient sacrifices, namely, the communion of the blessed body and blood of Christ. As for the people, when they hear the name, it draweth no more *their minds* to any cogitation of sacrifice than the name of a senator or of an alderman causeth them to think upon old age, or to imagine that every one so termed must needs be ancient because years were respected in the first nomination of both. Wherefore, to pass by the name, let them use what dialect they will; whether we call it a priesthood, a presbytership, or a ministry, it skilleth not.—*Ibid.*

#### V. PROPER FORCE OF THE TERM PRESBYTER.

The word presbyter is to be preferred to that of priest, as more appropriate and significant.

[14378] The word *presbyter* doth seem more fit, and in propriety of speech more agreeable, than *priest*, with the drift of the whole gospel of Jesus Christ. For what are they that embrace the gospel but sons of God? What are churches but His families? Seeing, therefore, we receive the adoption and state of sons by their ministry whom God hath chosen out for that purpose; seeing also that when we are the sons of God our continuance is still under their care which were our progenitors, what better title could there be given them than the reverend name of *presbyters*, or fatherly guides?—*Ibid.*

[14379] The Holy Ghost throughout the body of the New Testament, making so much mention of presbyters, doth not anywhere call them priests. The Prophet Esay, I grant, doth (Isa. lvi. 21), but in such sort as the ancient fathers by way of analogy. A presbyter, according to the proper meaning of the New Testament, is, "he unto whom our Saviour Christ hath communicated the power of spiritual procreation." Out of the twelve patriarchs issued the whole

multitude of Israel according to the flesh. And, according to the mystery of heavenly birth, our Lord's apostles we all acknowledge to be the patriarchs of His whole Church. St. John therefore beheld sitting about the throne of God in heaven four and twenty presbyters, the one half fathers of the old, the other of the new Jerusalem. In which respect the apostles likewise gave themselves the same title, albeit that name were not proper but common unto them with others.—*Ibid.*

#### VI. IMPORTANCE AND SACREDNESS OF THE MINISTERIAL FUNCTIONS.

[14380] We have for the least and meanest duties performed by virtue of ministerial power, that to dignify, grace, and authorize them, which no other offices on earth can challenge. Whether we preach, pray, baptize, communicate, . . . or whatsoever, as disposers of God's mysteries, our words, judgments, acts, and deeds, are not ours, but the Holy Ghost's. Enough, if unfeignedly and in heart we did believe it, enough to banish whatsoever may justly be thought corrupt, either in bestowing or in using, or in esteeming the same otherwise than is meet.—*Ibid.*

[14381] It was forbidden by the Mosaic Law, that any man with a blemish should serve at the altar of that worldly sanctuary; and the ministry of the Christian Church is not confined to a single tribe, but is open to all, not that the basest should be devoted to the immediate Divine service, but that there should be presented thereunto the noblest and most excellent. What shall we say, then, of that parent who for temporal views, for the sake of securing an inheritance, of opening an honourable and safe path to one of his children, offers to God, not the noblest, the most unblemished, of those which have been given to him, but the feeblest, the meanest, and the weakest; who devotes one of whose capacities to do active good in his generation he has no conviction, and whose character he knows not to be higher than that of his fellows, but lower? He thus does all in his power to paralyze the vital energies of his Church, and moreover entangles his own son in vows of which it is doubtful whether it will be for the welfare of his soul that he should ever discover the full force and meaning.—*H. B. Wilson, B.D.*

[14382] It is not a third of a man nor half a man, but a whole man that is needed for the ministry.—*M. J.*

[14383] Rather leave the ark to shake as it shall please God, than put unworthy hands to hold it up.—*Lord Bacon.*

#### VII. THE SOLEMN CONSIDERATIONS WHICH SHOULD INFLUENCE CANDIDATES.

[14384] Because the ministry is an office of  
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dignity and honour, some are doubtful whether any man may seek for it without offence, or, to speak more properly, doubtful they are not, but rather bold to accuse our discipline in this respect, as not only permitting, but requiring also ambitious suits and other oblique ways or means whereby to obtain it. Against this they plead that our Saviour did stay till His Father sent Him, and the apostles till He them; that the ancient bishops in the Church of Christ were examples and patterns of the same modesty. . . . Thus severely they censure and control ambition, if it be ambition which they take upon them to reprehend. For of that there is cause to doubt. Ambition, as we understand it, hath been accounted a vice which seeketh after honour inordinately. Ambitious minds esteeming it their greatest happiness to be admired, revered, and adored above others, use all means, lawful and unlawful, which may bring them to high rooms. But as for the power of order considered by itself, and as in this case it must be considered, such reputation it hath in the eye of this present world, that they which affect it rather need encouragement to bear contempt than deserve blame as men that carry aspiring minds.—*Hooker.*

[14385] The work whereunto this power serveth is commended, and the desire thereof allowed by the apostle for good. Nevertheless, because the burden thereof is heavy, and the charge great, it cometh many times to pass that the minds even of virtuous men are drawn into clean contrary affections, some in humility declining that by reason of hardness which others in regard of goodness only do with fervent alacrity covet. So that there is not the least degree in this service but it may be both in reverence shunned, and of very devotion longed for.—*Ibid.*

[14386] A lawyer may be admirably furnished with every gift of knowledge and of eloquence, and yet he may spend some of the best years of manhood in waiting for a client. A physician may possess science which would qualify him for high advancement, and yet linger long without being summoned to the bedside of one patient. A soldier may be shut up for months together in some gloomy barrack, or live through a forty years' peace, and die without once seeing service. But a clergyman has from the day of his ordination clients and patients, battles and sieges, enough and to spare. He waits not for the chances of an opening; he needs not, for his high calling, the advantages of a connection or a patron: around his doors are gathered the souls which ask his service; within his parish rages the battle in which he is to win his crown. Happy he who sees these things, and suffers not his ministry to lack its true reward by turning aside to a recompense low and illusory!—*Dean Vaughan.*

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## VIII. THE OFFICE OF ORDINATION IN THE ENGLISH LITURGY.

## 1 As regards the imposition of hands.

[14387] The imposition of hands signifies the overshadowing of God's protection or of His Spirit, which it procures upon the promise of Christ's presence with His Church when it prays to Him; . . . but . . . ordination is not a sacrament, and is limited to a particular effect of ministering to the Church the ordinances of God, according to the trust reposed in the office. The laying on of hands is given in lieu of the incommunicable breathing with which it was conferred by our Lord. "Yet that breath," says Bishop Andrewes, "though not into them for themselves, yet goeth into and through every act of their office and ministry, and by them conveyeth His saving grace to us all."—*Blunt*.

[14388] The cause why we breathe not as Christ did on them unto whom He imparted power is for that neither Spirit nor spiritual authority may be thought to proceed from us, which are but delegates, or assigns to give men possession of His graces.—*Hooker*.

## 2 As regards the words, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

*Authority for and aptness of the formula.*

[14389] A thing much stumbled at in the manner of giving orders is our using those memorable words of our Lord and Saviour Christ, "Receive the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost, they say, we cannot give, and therefore we "foolishly" bid men receive it. Notwithstanding, if it may please their wisdom as well to hear what fools can say as to control that which they do, thus we have heard some wise men teach, namely, that the "Holy Ghost" may be not the person alone, but the gifts of the Holy Ghost; and we know that spiritual gifts are not only abilities to do things miraculous, as to speak with tongues which were never taught us, to cure diseases without art, and such like, but also that the very authority and power which is given men in the Church to be ministers of holy things, this is contained within the number of those gifts whereof the Holy Ghost is author. And therefore He which giveth this power may say, without absurdity or folly, "Receive the Holy Ghost," to express the heavenly well-spring of that power which ecclesiastical ordinations do bestow.—*Ibid*.

[14390] If our Lord and Saviour Himself have used the self-same form of words, and that in the self-same kind of action, although there be but the least show of probability, yea, or any possibility, that His meaning might be the same which ours is, it should teach sober and grave men not to be too venturesome in condemning that of folly which is not impossible to have in it more profoundness of wisdom than flesh and blood should presume to control.—*Ibid*.

## 3 As regards the ceremony generally.

[14391] This ceremony is the well-head of

each man's ministry. The Nile, indeed, may hide his source, for he runs through unfruitful sands and dangerous wildernesses; but the river of the Christian ministry must be traceable through fructified regions and realms of peace, bright and distinct, to the source whence it is derived. And as a man, standing at the head of a stream, naturally speculates upon its course, is it slow or rapid, through glen or through plain, does it visit this place or that, so is the time of ordination a time for serious reflection indeed to all present.—*R. W. Evans*.

[14392] To the receiver, a designation so visible, so attested in an assembly so publicly standing in the presence of the Head of the Church, who will come to judgment on the last day, is well suited to warn him that he is become indeed a public character, with all eyes upon him, to the end of life; that he must move in their sight daily, displaying the various attributes of his character, and diverse functions of his missions as daily, and perhaps hourly, occasions call them forth in regulated succession or harmonious co-operation.—*Ibid*.

## IX. NON-EPISCOPAL CALLS TO THE MINISTRY.

## 1 Doctrine of the Reformed Churches of Protestant Dissent as to the right to ordain.

[14393] The Reformed Churches generally held the call of the people the only thing essential to the validity of the ministry; and taught that ordination is only a ceremony, which renders the call more august and authentic. Accordingly the Protestant Churches of Scotland, France, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Denmark, &c., have no episcopal ordination. For Luther, Calvin, Bucer, Melancthon, &c., and all the first reformers and founders of these churches, who ordained ministers among them, were themselves presbyters, and no other. And though in some of these churches there are ministers called superintendents or bishops, yet these are only *primi inter pares*, the first among equals, not pretending to any superiority of orders. Having themselves no other orders than what either presbyters gave them, or what was given them as presbyters, they can convey no other to those they ordain.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards)*.

[14394] Protestant Dissenters plead that their ordination, though not episcopal, is the same with that of all the illustrious Protestant Churches abroad, and object that a popish bishop should be received into the Church of England as a valid minister, rightly ordained, whilst the orders of another, ordained by the most learned religious presbyter which any foreign country can boast, are pronounced not valid, and he is required to submit to be ordained afresh. In opposition to episcopal ordination, they urge that Timothy was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (1 Tim. iv. 14), that Paul and Barnabas were ordained by certain



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prophets and teachers in the Church of Antioch, and not by any bishop presiding in that city (Acts xiii. 1-3), and that it is a well-known fact that presbyters in the Church of Alexandria ordained even their own bishops for more than two hundred years in the earliest stages of Christianity.—*Ibid.*

[14395] Dissenting Protestants maintain that the superiority of bishops to presbyters is not pretended to be of Divine, but of human institution; not grounded on Scripture, but only upon the custom or ordinances of this realm, by the first reformers and founders of the Church of England; nor by many of its most learned and eminent doctors since. In Stillingfleet's "Irenicum," the learned author affirms and shows this to be the sentiment of Cranmer, and other chief reformers, both in Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth's reign. of Archbishop Whitgift, Bishops Bridges, Lee, Hooker, Sutcliffe, Hales, Chillingworth, &c.—*Ibid.*

[14396] The Protestant Dissenters think it strange that the validity of orders and ministrations should be derived, as some have contended, from a succession of popish bishops, bishops of a Church which, by the definition of the nineteenth article of the Church of England, can be no part of the true visible Church of Christ, and bishops, likewise, who consider the Protestant clergy, although ordained by Protestant bishops, as mere common unconsecrated laymen.—*Ibid.*

## 2 The mode of ordinations of Dissenters.

[14397] Among Dissenters, ordinations vary. In the Establishment of Scotland, where there are no bishops, the power of ordination is lodged in the presbytery. Among the Wesleyan Methodists, the ordination of their minister is in the annual conference, with a president at its head, and is by prayer without imposition of hands. Among the Calvinistic Methodists, ordination is performed by the sanction and assistance of their own ministers. Among the Independents and Baptists, the power of ordination lies in the suffrage of the people. The qualifications of the candidate are first known, tried, and approved by the Church. After which trial the Church proceeds to give him a call to the ministry; which, he accepting, the public acknowledgment thereof is signified by ordination.—*Ibid.*

[14398] Though the Dissenters practise ordination, we find they are not agreed respecting it. Some contend for the power of ordination as belonging to the people, the exercise of which right by them constitutes a minister, and confers validity on his public ministrations. Others suppose it belongs to those who are already in office. . . . According to the former opinion, it is argued that the word *ordain* was originally equal to choose, or appoint, so that if twenty Christians nominated a man to instruct them once, the man was appointed or ordained

a preacher for the time. . . . Some, however, on this side of the question do not go so far as to say that the essence of ordination lies in the choice of the people, but in the solemn and public separation to office by prayer; still, however, they think that ordination by either bishops, presbyters, or any superior character, cannot be necessary to make a minister, or ordain a pastor in any particular Church; for Jesus Christ, say they, would never leave the subsistence of His Churches, or the efficacy of His Word and Sacraments, to depend on the uninterrupted succession of any office or officer. . . . On the other side it is observed that, although Christians have the liberty of choosing their own pastor, yet they have no power or right to confer the office itself.—*Ibid.*

## X. CLERICAL FALLIBILITY.

[14399] We must learn not to put implicit confidence in any man's opinion merely because of his office as a minister. Peter was one of the very chiefest apostles, and yet he could err. This is a point on which men have continually gone astray. It is the rock on which the early Church struck. Men soon took up the saying, "Do nothing contrary to the mind of the bishop." But what are bishops, priests, and deacons? What are the best of ministers but men—dust, ashes, and clay—men of like passions with ourselves, men exposed to temptations, liable to weaknesses and infirmities?—*Bp. Ryle.*

[14400] What saith the Scripture, "Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (1 Cor. iii. 5.) Bishops have often driven the truth into the wilderness, and decreed that to be true which was false. The greatest errors have been begun by ministers. Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of the high priest, made religion to be abhorred by the children of Israel. Annas and Caiaphas, though in the direct line of descent from Aaron, crucified the Lord! Arius, that great heresiarch, was a minister.—*Ibid.*

[14401] It is absurd to suppose that ordained men cannot go wrong. We should follow them so far as they teach according to the Bible, but no further. We should believe them so long as they can say, "Thus it is written," "thus saith the Lord," but further than this we are not to go. Infallibility is not to be found in ordained men, but in the Bible.—*Ibid.*

[14402] It matters nothing what a man is called. He may be a czar, an emperor, a king, a prince. He may be a pope or a cardinal, an archbishop or a bishop, a dean or an archdeacon, a priest or a deacon. He is still a *fallible man*. Neither the crown, nor the diadem, nor the anointing oil, nor the mitre, nor the imposition of hands, can prevent a man making mistakes.—*Ibid.*

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[14403] We are all naturally inclined to lean upon whom we can see, rather than upon God whom we cannot see. We naturally love to lean upon the ministers of the visible Church rather than upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd and Bishop and High Priest, who is invisible.—*Ibid.*

[14404] It is a snare to the English Episcopalian to make idols of Bishop Pearson and "the Judicious Hooker." It is a snare to the Scotch Presbyterian to pin his faith on John Knox, the Covenanters, and Dr. Chalmers. It is a snare to the Methodists in our day to worship the memory of John Wesley. It is a snare to the Independent to see no fault in any opinion of Owen and Doddridge. It is a snare to the Baptist to exaggerate the wisdom of Gill and Robert Hall. All these are snares, and into these snares how many fall!—*Ibid.*

## 7

## COMMON PRAYER, OR PUBLIC WORSHIP.

## I. NATURE OF DIVINE WORSHIP.

[14405] There are states which primarily look within upon self, and there are other states which primarily look without upon something which is not self, something which attracts the mind by its own intrinsic worth or worthiness. And this is the real meaning of the word worship. It is related to the words worth and worthy, so that the worshipful and the worshipful are the same thing. In worship the prime thought is not the profit or pleasure which may come to me, but the worth or worthiness of that which I see.—*W. Page Roberts.*

## II. ITS DISTINCTIVE MARKS.

## 1 It is an authorized ordinance of the Church of Christ.

[14406] Over and above the duty of private prayer, it is obvious that from the apostles' days it has been the practice of the Church to convoke her members for joint supplication, under the guidance and presidency of an ordained man, acting in his official capacity, by the authority of those to whom the government of the Church pertains. This is the one characteristic of public worship, properly so called.—*Bp. Woodford.*

[14407] Public worship differs from the voluntary assembly of a household, just as a regularly constituted senate, summoned together by legal authority, and deliberating according to fixed rules, and under duly commissioned presidency, differs from the unbidden meeting of a multitude of men for the purpose of mutual advice and counsel.—*Ibid.*

## 2 It denotes a mutual relationship between the worshipper and the worshipped.

[14408] The distinctive mark of true worship

is, that not only human will, but Divine grace also fulfils the object of the service, namely, union with the Lord, and union of the faithful with each other in the fellowship of the Lord; or, again, true worship is not only a relation in which man puts himself with God, but equally a relation wherein God puts Himself towards man.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[14409] It is the fundamental mystery of Christian worship that Christ, as the eternal Lord and King of His Church, is not absent from the congregation, but truly present (Matt. xviii. 29), and puts His invisible activity into the holy ordinances appointed by Him, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body" (Eph. iv. 12).—*Ibid.*

## 3 It is a due recognition, in the aspect of prayer, of the mediatorship of Jesus.

[14410] The distinctive feature of Christian prayer is, that it is prayer in the name of Jesus. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John xvi. 23, 24). Prayer in the name of Jesus is not only prayer about the concerns of Jesus and of His kingdom; not only prayer for the things of Christ, but prayer which we offer relying upon the word of Jesus, and trusting His promises; praying, in the full power and warrant which He has given to His Church, for a fulness of power from Him who is the eternal Mediator between God and man; the heavenly Priest, who has provided an everlasting atonement, who ever makes intercession for us before the Father, by whom we, being justified through Him, have access to the Father.—*Ibid.*

[14411] As no other prayer under heaven possesses so pure and holy an import as does prayer in the name of Jesus, so no other prayer under heaven possesses the confidence which springs from the right of a child, the spirit of adoption which Christ has given us. In the time of doubt, of need, and of conflict, the Church prays,—the individual prays,—in the strength of Him who is our Advocate with the Father; and in proportion as the prayer offered is really prayer in His name, it will be heard; for in like proportion it is Jesus who prays the prayer through us.—*Ibid.*

## III. ITS LEADING PRINCIPLES.

## 1 It must be directed to the right object.

[14412] It is written plainly, both in the Old and New Testament: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Deut. vi. 13; Matt. iv. 10). All adoration and prayers addressed to the Virgin Mary, the saints and angels, is utterly useless, and unwarranted by Scripture. It is worship that is mere waste of time. There is not the slightest proof that the departed saints or the angels can hear our worship, or that, if they did hear it, they could

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[COMMON PRAYER, OR PUBLIC WORSHIP.]

do anything for us. It is worship that is most offensive to God. He is a jealous God, and has declared that He will not give His glory to another.—*Bp. Ryle.*

[14413] Of all the Ten Commandments there is none more stringent and sweeping than the second. It forbids us not only to worship, but even to “bow down” to anything beside God.—*Ibid.*

2 It must be either directly scriptural, deducible from Scripture, or in harmony with Scripture.

[14414] We do not require that everything should have *for* it, chapter and verse; but we do require most strictly that no one thing should have *against* it, chapter or verse. We do not slavishly limit ourselves to the letter of Scripture, but we do bow in solemn reverence before the spirit of Scripture. We do not say, You may not enjoin a form of prayer, nor use a ceremony, nor celebrate an ordinance, which you do not find expressly commanded in the Word of God. But we do declare, You may not practise any rites or ceremonies which are clean contrary to Scripture, either in its letter or in its spirit.—*T. Griffith, M.A.*

[14415] Are there practices which foster the natural tendency of our corrupted nature to superstition—superstition which is no mere excess of piety, but which is the antagonist, and usurps the place, of genuine piety—which may not, therefore, be pitied simply, or borne with as harmless weakness, but which must be provided against or driven out as ruinous delusion? These must be (not merely not allowed but) carefully watched against and discouraged by the Church of Christ. Hezekiah not only “removed the high places and brake the images and cut down the groves”—the direct incentives to idolatry—but he also “brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made”—that touching memorial of God’s signal mercy; “for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan;” *i.e.*, nothing better than a piece of brass.—*Ibid.*

[14416] From whatsoever ordinances, rules, and customs frustrate the one great aim of the Christian Church, a brotherly unity—and the one great purpose of the power accorded to its rulers, the doing all things unto edification—that Church will jealously abstain, which recollects how strenuously both the despotism of the Pharisees and the dogmatism of the Judaizing Christians are condemned in the Word of God.—*Ibid.*

3 It must be intelligent.

[14417] Worshippers must know what they are doing. It is written plainly as a charge against the Samaritans. “Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship” (John iv. 22). It is written of the heathen Athenians, that they ignorantly worshipped an “unknown

god.” It is utterly false that ignorance is the mother of devotion.—*Bp. Ryle.*

[14418] The poor Italian papists, unable to read, and not knowing a chapter in the Bible, may appear extremely devout and sincere, as they kneel in crowds before the image of the Virgin Mary, or hear Latin prayers which they do not understand. But it is utterly preposterous to suppose that their worship is acceptable to God. He who made man at the beginning made him an intelligent being, with mind as well as body. A worship in which the mind takes no part is useless and unprofitable. It might suit a beast as well as a man.—*Ibid.*

[14419] Worship should be intelligent; marked by all the cautiousness, deliberation, and sobriety of thought. There are three principal classes of offenders against this requirement. 1. Those who worship simply from custom. They are not governed by the deep reasons of this sacred duty, but without due reflection follow what is considered to be a common obligation. Hence they go with careless feet, walking in the ruts of custom. They are imitators of others. Their devotion is soulless—mechanical. 2. Those who worship with a preoccupied mind. The mind being filled with other objects, thought wanders, and the worship is but languidly performed. 3. Those who in the act of worship are not completely possessed with a solemn purpose. One great purpose must carry away the soul of the worshipper. The service of worship demands the concentration of thought and feeling. The soul, like the feet, must not wander in uncertainty, but go straight to her solemn purpose.—*Preacher’s Commentary.*

4 It must be heartfelt.

[14420] The affections must be employed as well as our intellect, and our inward man must serve God as well as our body. It is written of the Jews in Ezekiel’s time, “They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as My people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness” (Ezek. xxxiii. 31). The heart is the principal thing that God asks man to bring in all his approaches to Him, whether public or private.—*Bp. Ryle.*

[14421] The worship is not to end in itself, as if external homage were all that was required of us. It must have issue in quickened spiritual power and practical duty. No barren or unproductive worship is acceptable. The end of worship is to stimulate to obedience. “To hear” in the language of the Old Testament signifies to obey, *i.e.*, to hear with the inner ear. Thought is awakened that it might lead to action. The sense of the Divine presence summons to duty. Obedience is the proper vesture of the thoughts and feelings roused in the sanctuary.—*Preacher’s Commentary.*



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[14422] The best, the surest, the most chaste, and the most devout worship of God, is that which is paid Him with a pure, sincere, and uncorrupt mind, and words truly representing the thoughts of the heart. Serve God with a pure, honest, holy frame of spirit, bring a heart that is but generously honest, and He will accept of the plainest sacrifice.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

### 5 It must be reverent.

[14423] On two distinct occasions, at the beginning and at the end of His ministry, our Lord cast out of the temple the buyers and sellers who were profaning its courts by their traffic. People who call themselves Christians, and go to churches and chapels to stare about, whisper, fidget, yawn, or sleep, but not to pray, or praise, or listen, are not a whit better than the wicked Jews. They do not consider that God detests profaneness and carelessness in His presence, and that to behave before God as they would not dare to behave before their sovereign at a levée or a drawing-room, is a very grave offence indeed. It does not follow, because "bodily service" alone is useless, that it does not matter how we behave ourselves in the congregation.—*lip. Kyle.*

[14424] Surely even nature, reason, and common sense should teach us that there is a manner and demeanour suitable to mortal man when he draws nigh to his Almighty Maker. It is not for nothing that it is written, "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him."—*Ibid.*

[14425] Keep thy foot when thou goest. Tread warily, as one on dangerous ground, ground on which it is easy to stumble, and perilous to fall. Could any words better express the cautious, guarded, reverent spirit which befits one who is on his way to worship? It is no time for a light, a bold, a noisy step, an easy and confident bearing, like that of one who is going into the company of his equals, to enjoy the recreations or amusements of this world: he who is going to the house of God must keep his foot; must come cautiously and guardedly, as to a place beset with unseen foes, and filled no less with the presence of the Most High God. Like Moses, when he approached the burning bush; like Joshua before the mysterious warrior who announced himself as the captain of the host of the Lord, he must be charged to put off his shoes from off his feet, because the place whereon he stands is holy ground.—*Dean Vaughan.*

[14426] In order to secure the spirit of reverence, we must attend to certain rules of duty in worship. 1. *Be careful in the employment of words.* Rash and hasty words are here forbidden. This is not meant to check devotion, or to cool the ardour of the soul by some formal and

severe requirement. It is opposed (1) *To empty words.* These are uttered without solemn reflection—empty phrases, possessing but little meaning for the worshipper. They are mere words, spoken without due consideration—"rash." It is opposed (2) *To superficial words.* They do not proceed from the inner depths of the soul. They are quickly uttered, and in any required number, as involving no expense of thought or feeling. Words that are not winged by the soul's desire cannot rise to heaven. It is opposed (3) *To all useless repetitions.* It is not a fatal defect in prayer that it is marked by some repetition, for the soul may love to linger upon a thought to make her desire more emphatic, or to express intense emotion. The habit censured is the regarding mere words as possessing merit—that their multitude can atone for sin, and make compromise for the high demands of duty. To avoid irreverence, we must 2. *Have a proper sense of the majesty of the object of worship.* We have to remember that God dwells in unapproachable glory, far beyond the reaches of our mind; and that we are upon the earth—the scene of ignorance, error, sin, and want. With such a conviction, the language we utter before high heaven will be marked by brevity of expression. A sense of reverence will impose on us a solemn reserve. The employment of few and careful words most befits the sacred act of worship. (1) *Because this is the method of true passion.* The most powerful feelings discharge themselves in few, simple, and direct expressions. True passion disdains the long array of words. (2) *Because it suits the nature of the duty.* The silent awe and admiration proper to worship must not lose their effect through the intrusion of the multitude of words. When in the presence of a Superior Being, reserve and caution are the most commendable qualities of speech. (3) *Because it is agreeable to the best examples.* The prayers recorded in the Bible are brief, and expressed in words of simple majesty. The Lord's Prayer is marked by fulness in little compass. 3. *Have a proper sense of the evil of careless speech in devotion.* It has a bad effect upon the soul. The language degenerates into weakness and twaddle. Devotion becomes a mere babble of words involving no serious effort of intellect or heart. As dreams often arise from the perplexing cares and business of the day—these, in a confused manner, presenting themselves in sleep—so the multitude of words, though uttered not without some carefulness at first, at length degenerates into confusion and unreality.—*Preacher's Homiletical Commentary.*

[14427] God is to be worshipped with the body as with the mind; for He made both, redeemed both, and will glorify both; but there are amongst us those who have banished the worship of the body out of our churches; to bow their knees, or to stand upright in some of the more solemn acts of worship, is thought superstitious; and they measure the purity of religion by its rusticities and indecencies.—*James Monroe.*

## IV. ITS OBLIGATIONS.

[14428] Who has not felt the depressing influence of a church occupied only by a scanty train of worshippers? The building, the music, the liturgy, seem out of keeping with the meagre assembly. Ofttimes, it may be, people question whether they may not as well pray at home, as in that empty church. Oh, sad forgetfulness of Christ's most awful words! In the fabric apparently so deserted is there a mightier Presence than the most earnest devotions of the maturest saint can secure when alone. The eye rests only on a little flock; but indeed, indeed, the court of heaven is there; the Only-Begotten is among them. Two or three, the smallest possible plurality of suppliants, He who is Infinite will regard as the representatives of a countless multitude.—*Bp. Woodford.*

[14429] As ships will ride a long time in a roadstead, when they might be in the haven, for this end, that they may be in the wind's way to take the first opportunity that shall be offered for their intended voyage; so do thou ride in the road of God's ordinances, waiting for the gales of the Spirit. Thou knowest not how soon that wind may blow on the waters of the sanctuary, and drive the vessel of thy soul swiftly, and land it safely at the haven of happiness, of heaven.—*G. Swinnock, M.A.*

[14430] We are all members of God's family. We are by profession His children and servants. As immortal creatures His house is our home in this world. There are stated seasons of attending it. There every one hath, or should have, a place. Every good man "loveth the habitation of God's house." When we are necessarily detained from it, we should earnestly desire and long to return, saying, "When shall I come and appear before God?" To wander from His house, to "forsake the assembling of yourselves together," is dishonourable and affronting to Him. It is unjust, unkind, and discouraging to Christian ministers. It is injurious to yourselves; losing all the advantages of public worship and instruction. It is weakening the credit of religion; setting a bad example before others; and disqualifying you for the business and blessedness of God's upper family in heaven.—*J. Orton.*

## V. ITS NECESSITY.

[14431] In a general sense, the whole Christian life may be called a service of God, a worship; but as the kingdom of God was not only to be a secret thing in this world; as it consists not merely in hidden and internal piety, not only as heaven penetrating human life, but is also to make itself known in its own independent reality, the service of God must be embodied in a range of sacred observances, in which the Church can unite, apart from the labour and strife of worldly life, in order to realize the true purpose of the kingdom of God, in spirit and in

truth, and free from admixture with the aims and business of this world.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[14432] Worship, as we call it specially, is only separated from the rest of our doings in order that its spirit may flow through the whole of those doings. And it is very unlikely, even if not altogether impossible, that you will get sanctity and devotion diffused throughout a life, unless there be special acts, special times, special places, at which there shall be gathered, in order that it may come out from them with double force, the devotion which is intended to be shed abroad over the whole days. I have very little faith in the men "making all the week a Sunday," who do not make the Sunday a Sunday; and I have very little faith in the spirituality which has got up so high, that it can do without standing-ground upon earth—the religion which has become so pure that it does not need places, times, forms, the association of brethren, and the help of others! He must either be very strong who does not need the prayers and ordinances of God's house and the preaching of God's truth, or very, very weak who does not know that he needs them; and in any case, *he* will be far more apt to forget, who does not thankfully avail himself of this means of remembering.—*Alex. Maclaren, D.D.*

## VI. ITS VALUE.

1. The very nature of common worship shows its efficacy in maintaining our connection with the mystical body of Christ.

[14433] What is worship but the voice and action of the Christian community, which, if it has life, must by such symptoms show that it lives? Every organized body has some mode of giving expression to that pervading principle which renders it a whole. A tree puts forth leaves; animal life discovers itself by sound and motion. This is that simple method of rendering homage to God which the Psalmist ascribes to the whole visible creation. And if the Church be not a mere aggregation of men, who meet by accident within the same precincts, but the living exponent of a spiritual power, which renders it Christ's mystical body, then that quickening energy, with which it is instinct, must have some means of utterance. How deeply this feeling was implanted from the first in the Christian community, appears from the grounds on which the importance of public worship has always rested. Its indispensable necessity must have arisen from the nature of the case, inasmuch as it did not arise from positive enactment. No positive command to meet for united worship occurs in the New Testament, except that incidental one in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which cannot have been relied upon in the Western Church, by which in early times the Epistle to the Hebrews was not received; and yet the first Christians not only encountered every danger, but, what was a still stronger proof of their conviction, they violated those

civil laws to which they usually paid such prompt obedience, rather than forego the privilege of that common worship whereby each man maintained his part in the fellowship of his Saviour.—*Bp. Wilberforce.*

[14434] Regular attendance at the public worship of God is exactly suited to keep alive the consciousness of Church membership. As often as we invoke God in private, we have before us only the recollection of our own wants and transgressions. If we go a step further, and gather our households around us, our thoughts still range within a narrow circle; wider, indeed, than that which limits the aspirations of the solitary petitioner, yet more contracted than befits one who holds fast by the doctrine of the Communion of Saints. But the moment we step into the sanctuary, even though the actual number assembled be not greater than that which constitutes oftentimes a single family, we are immediately reminded of the spiritual relationship in which all who have been baptized stand to one another. And more than this, our union not only with the living but the dead, is preached unto us by the same assembling of ourselves together. The single family has but a temporary existence, the spiritual household has been renewed from generation to generation.—*Bp. Woodford.*

3 It represents not only the worship of the particular, but of the universal Church.

[14435] The Son of God has distinctly revealed that, as the hearer of prayer, He will consider a few of His members to be the representatives of the whole body; nay, more than this, He has fixed the number requisite thus to represent His kingdom. The prayers, therefore, which are offered in the house of God are not only the prayers of the individuals assembled, but of the universal Church speaking by them. It is quite possible that a majority in a congregation may spend the hours passed in the sanctuary with little devotion. Their thoughts may wander, their desires may be earthly, their hearts cold. Will the Lord therefore turn a deaf ear? Will He be no more entreated? No; for the individuals are, on these occasions, lost in the sum. The voice which rises from God's house around the everlasting throne is the voice of Christ's body upon earth, and the preponderance even of unworthy worshippers will not banish the Eternal Presence.—*Ibid.*

[14436] All that private devotion procures, all the strength, all the comfort, more, much more, may you gain by public worship. Whatever confidence you have that you are heard when you pray alone, double assurance may you feel when you identify yourselves with the Church of the firstborn. Very wonderful, O God, art Thou in Thy holy places! He whose paths are in the deep waters, and whose footsteps are not known, has told us that His way is in the sanctuary.—*Ibid.*

[14437] This is a great comfort for us to know that all the Church and congregation of Christ doth pray for us, and that all the treasures of God's riches, that is to say, Christ Himself, the kingdom of heaven, the holy gospel, the sacraments, and the prayers of all godly men, be common to us all. For whosoever any godly man requireth anything of God, he also requireth the same thing for us; for no man ought to pray for himself alone. And this is a great consolation for all Christian people, for the Scripture saith that the prayer of one just man may do much with God; and, therefore, when many just and godly men do make their supplications unto God with one accord, we may be sure that their prayers are heard.—*Abp. Cranmer.*

3 It is the true secret of the Church's power.

[14438] As the Lord strengthens His Church by means of saving doctrine, He also maintains her by true worship; for doctrine and worship are as inseparable from each other as truth and life.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[14439] It is not by measurable results—by her definite deeds of charity, their fruits on men's outward lives, and effects on their material interests—that the worth of the Church to the world at large can be duly estimated; no, nor even by those inward and spiritual blessings of which she is the instrument to the souls of the faithful. She stands as an unknown protector in the midst of those who are ignorant of Christ, and who despise her; she calls down blessings from above, else unattainable; and acts, under this relation to the world, in a thousand ways—which, from our ignorance of the mode of God's dealings, we cannot trace—for its continued conservation, and the suspension of God's final judgments upon it.—*J. Garbett, M.A.*

[14440] As it is in individuals, so it is in the incorporation of the Church—its outward activities, and the whole manifestation, in power, of its graces and privileges, are certain to wax and wane with prayer and intercession—decaying with the coldness of love and the decrepitude of faith—invigorated and disciplined to final triumph by its constant exercise.—*Ibid.*

4 It is the mainstay of religion and the nurse of virtue.

[14441] By praying to God we increase our trust and dependence on Him, as a sure protection in all situations; by praising Him we recall many blessings to our thoughts we should otherwise have overlooked or forgotten, and thereby become better satisfied with our condition; by confession we grow acquainted with our defects, and which way to apply our cares for curing them; by profession of faith we inculcate the convictions of our understanding upon our imagination, making them habitual and practical persuasions; by intercession we extend our charity to all around us, not excepting the



worthless and the wicked; by expressions of forgiveness we quench the sparks of revenge, envy, anger, animosity, and all unruly passions that would make havoc in our breasts; by acknowledgment of the Divine Wisdom in bringing forth good out of both good and evil we find encouragement to the exercise of our little powers, and learn patience under misfortunes, cross accidents, and injuries that fall upon us; by pious resolutions we gather strength to give our judgment the mastery over sudden humour and fond inclination; by compliance with ceremonies we inure ourselves to discipline, and render our inferior faculties more tractable by the prudential rules of our own reason.—*A. Tucker.*

[14442] There is no religious exercise rightly performed which does not help to improve the growth of some salutary virtue, and no virtue which may not receive nourishment from some religious exercise.—*Ibid.*

[14443] Worship is an abstract and summary of Christian religion, an act of religion and Divine worship, confessing His power and His mercy; it celebrates His attributes, and confesses His glories, and reveres His person, and implores His aid, and gives thanks for His blessings; it is an act of humility, condescension, and dependence, expressed in the prostration of our bodies and humiliation of our spirits; it is an act of charity when we pray for others; it is an act of repentance when it confesses and begs pardon for our sins, and exercises every grace according to the design of the man and the matter of the prayer; every part is an excellence, and every end of it is a blessing; and every design is a motive, and every need is an impulse to this holy office.—*Bp. Taylor.*

[14444] Let us but remember how many needs we have, at how cheap a rate we may obtain their remedies, and yet how honourable the employment is to go to God and to fetch our supplies with easiness and joy, and then, without further preface, we may address ourselves to the understanding of that duty by which we imitate the employment of angels and beatified spirits, by which we ascend to God in spirit while we remain on earth, and God descends on earth while He yet resides in heaven, sitting there in the throne of His kingdom.—*Ibid.*

## VII. ITS MOTIVES.

[14445] We worship God, we praise and pray to Him, not because we think that He is proud of our worship, or fond of our praise or prayers, or affected with them, as mankind are, or that all our service can contribute in the least degree to His happiness or good, but because it is good for us to be disposed towards God, because it is just and right and suitable to the nature of things, and becoming the relation we stand in to our supreme Lord and Governor.—*Bp. Berkeley.*

[14446] It is not sufficient that we think of the

service of God as a work of the least necessity, or of small employment, but that it be done by us as God intended it; that it be done with great earnestness and passion, with much zeal and desire; that we refuse no labour; that we bestow on it much time; that we use the best guides, and arrive at the end of glory by all the ways of grace, of prudence, and religion.—*Bp. Taylor.*

[14447] If thou come to the worship of God in mere custom, or to make thy carnal heart believe that God will forgive thee because thou so far servest Him, or to quiet thy conscience with the doing of a formal task of duty, or to be seen of men, or that thou mayest not be thought ungodly—if these be thy ends, thou wilt speed accordingly.—*R. Baxter.*

[14448] Remember whither you are going, and why: to God's immediate presence; to the very throne of grace, that you may there receive mercy and find grace for future need. Shall we venture to set out, as we might go to a feast or to a spectacle, without an earnest and fervent supplication for His blessing from whom alone comes the preparation of the heart, no less than the answer of the lips? Constant indeed to every one of us is the temptation to neglect this duty. We are going, we say to ourselves, to the house of prayer—we can pray there. Any little excuse is enough to put aside that preparation on which yet nearly all the profit of our public worship must ever depend. Thus not only does the great enemy catch away the word when it is sown, but he prevents that process of previous softening by which alone the ground can be prepared for its reception. Coming to the house of God hard and cold and impassive, no wonder if we leave it unmoved and unimpressed.—*Dean Vaughan.*

## VIII. ITS NEGLECT.

### I Common excuses for neglecting public worship.

[14449] (1) "I can worship God as well at home;" the excuse of self-will and rebellion, contrary alike to Scripture, reason, and experience. (a) Do those persons who make such an excuse really worship God habitually and spiritually in their own homes? Is it not generally the vain pretence of those who seldom worship God at all? (b) Do such persons treat the kind invitation to his house of any earthly superior with such indifference? (c) Can any one pretend that it is really the language of a humble, loving, and obedient heart? If all followed such a process, what would be the effect upon the Church and upon the world? (2) "I cannot find the time;" an excuse almost universally refuted by the time given, by those who make it, to other things, often the most unimportant and trifling pleasures, gossip, useless books, foolish company. Alas! how do the blind heathen, and Mahomedans, and the followers of many false religions, and the votaries of science, put to

shame the vast multitude of baptized and professing Christians! (3) "There are so many hindrances." Sometimes the weather is too hot, or too cold; the distance too far; the visit of a friend; the length of the service. So many things are allowed to form an excuse where the will is disinclined. (4) "There are plenty of people who do go to church who are no better than those who don't go." The answer is scarce necessary—"And if there be, what is that to thee?" Will that clear you at the day of reckoning? Besides, it is not the full truth. Can it be denied that the best people in every place, the holiest, and happiest, and most benevolent, do attend and value the house of God?—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

## 2 Danger of neglecting public worship.

*Slaxity in this respect is a fruitful source of much modern infidelity.*

[14450] In the large towns of our country and of the Continent atheism is rapidly spreading, and its beginning, I think, may be detected in the neglect of public religious service. I know that this neglect may be and must be regarded as an effect, but it is also a cause. When a man begins to neglect his Church or his place of worship, he loses one of the things which keep faith in God alive within him; for as a rule men do not supply the loss they sustain in neglecting public religious service by adopting any private solitary Divine service of their own. If men do not come into contact with the thought of God at church, as a rule they do not come into contact with that thought anywhere. Life is too crowded with business and care to leave time for the training of the soul in Divine things. If it were not for the Sunday services of the Church many men would never feel the touch of God or of unearthly realities; and therefore the neglect of public religious service tends to make a man into an atheist, and to be an atheist is to be without that potent influence on which the highest welfare of mankind depends.—*W. Page Roberts, M.A.*

[14451] It is too sad, and yet undeniable, that wherever the solemn and public worship of God in certain and fixed places dedicated to that use is discontinued, religion, the honour and reverence of God, immediately decays and becomes forgotten. As in all parts of the Christian Church it may be observed, that wherever the public worship of God in churches hath been taken from Christians, as in Persia and Africa, the faith of Christ hath been wholly lost in one or two generations; whereas the Church of Greece, by the advantage of the use of Churches permitted to them, hath continued to flourish and retain her faith unshaken under the government of the Turks, although continually oppressed, discountenanced, injured, and persecuted by them.—*Wharton's Sermons.*

## IX. ADVANTAGES OF THE ENGLISH LITURGY.

[14452] For nothing do we more admire the

services of our Church, than for the carefulness displayed that there be no losing sight of the leading doctrines of the faith. It may be said of the clergy of the Church of England, that they are almost compelled by the Almanack, if not by a sense of the high duties of their calling, to bring successively before their congregations the prominent articles of Christianity. It is not left to their own option, as it comparatively would be if they were not fastened to a ritual, to pass a year without speaking of the crucifixion, the resurrection, and ascension of Christ, of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, or of the outpouring of the Spirit. If they be disposed to keep any of these matters out of their discourses, the Collects bring the omitted doctrines before the people, and convict the pastors of unfaithfulness.—*H. Melville, B.D.*

[14453] A dissenting congregation may go on for years, and never once be directed to the grand doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. They are dependent on their minister. He may advance what he chooses, and keep back what he chooses; for he selects his own lessons, as well as his own texts. An established congregation is not thus dependent on its minister. He may be an Unitarian in his heart; but he must be so far a Trinitarian to his people as to declare from the desk, even if he keep silence in the pulpit, that "the Catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity." And thus, whatever the objections which may be urged against forms of prayer, we cannot but think that a country without a liturgy is a country which lies open to all the incursions of heresy.—*Ibid.*

[14454] The dialect of prayer established in Christian usage wins our trust; we sympathize with its theoretical significance; we find no fault with its intensity of spiritual life. It commends itself to our conscience and good sense as being what the phraseology of devout affection should be. Ancient forms of prayer are beautiful exceedingly. Their hallowed associations fascinate us like old songs. In certain imaginative moods, we fall into delicious reverie over them.—*A. Phelps.*

[14455] The ritual of England breathes a Divine calm. You think of people walking through ripening fields on a mild day to their church door. It is the work of a nation sitting in peace, possessing their land. It is the work of a wealthy nation, that, by dedicating a part of its wealth, consecrates the remainder—that acknowledges the fountain from which all flows. The prayers are devout, humble, fervent. They are not impassioned. A wonderful temperance and sobriety of discretion, that which in worldly things would be called good sense, prevails in them; but you must name it better in things spiritual. The framers evidently bore in mind the continual consciousness of waiting for all. Nor must it be forgotten that the received version and the Book of Common Prayer—observe

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[COMMON PRAYER, OR PUBLIC WORSHIP.]

the word "common," expressing exactly what I affirm—are beautiful by the words—that there is no other such English—simple, touching, apt, venerable, hued as the thoughts are—musical—the most English that is known—of a Hebraic strength and antiquity, yet lucid and gracious as if of and for to-day.—*Carlyle*.

[14456] High Churchmen, Broad Churchmen, Low Churchmen, perhaps even Nonconformists, however much they would each desire to see their own plans carried out, yet feel a stronger spiritual attraction towards the Church of England than towards any other community that invites their allegiance.—*Dean Stanley*.

[14457] A moment's thought will show that fixed forms of prayer are an indispensable condition of common prayer; for how can we join with one accord in offering up our supplications before God, unless we know beforehand what we are going to ask? What an advantage it is for a congregation, in offering up their prayers, not to be dependent on the memory, or fluency, or idiosyncrasies, or health, or varying moods of the minister who conducts the service! However devout and able he may be, he may neglect to mention many things that ought never to be omitted in common prayer; he may give an undue prominence to matters in which he himself takes a special interest, or to matters of transient importance that already occupy too large a share of the congregation's thoughts; he may repeat himself to the point of wearisomeness; he may divorce prayer from those cardinal doctrines of religion upon which prayer should always be made to rest, and from which all its hopes are derived; he may foist into his prayers matters that do not belong to prayer at all, and that ought to appear, if anywhere, in a sermon; he may hesitate, and falter, and grow confused, and so distract his hearers in the midst of their devotions.—*Evan Daniel, M.A.*

[14458] Where a fixed form of prayer is used, as in the Church of England, the congregation are quite independent of the minister in offering up their prayers. They are always sure of being able to pour out their souls to God in carefully digested forms of prayer, the product of ages of piety, such as no individual mind, however gifted and cultivated, could hope to rival in the spur of the moment.—*Ibid.*

#### X. CHURCH ACCOMMODATION, EXTERNAL AIDS, AND CEREMONIAL OBSERVANCES.

[14459] Evangelical religion does not object to handsome churches, good ecclesiastical architecture, a well-ordered ceremonial, and a well-conducted service. . . . We like handsome, well-arranged places of worship when we can get them. We abhor slovenliness and disorder in God's service as much as any. We would have all things done "decently and in order." But we steadily maintain that simplicity should be the grand characteristic of Christian worship.—*Bp. Ryle*.

[14460] It cannot tell well for the religious feeling of a country if there be parsimony in its churches, whilst there is profusion everywhere else. The churches—not the streets, not the squares, not the warehouses, not the docks, not the palaces—the churches ought to be the chief evidences, as well by their stateliness as their number, of the growing power and wealth of a Christian kingdom. We have nothing to say against the multiplication of spacious mansions, or lofty edifices in which commerce may hold her court, literature gather her votaries, or legislators debate. But woe must be unto a country if, whilst all this goes forward, the house of the Lord be not enlarged, or enlarged only at the least possible expense, so that its courts shall want the splendour which every other structure exhibits.—*H. Melville, B.D.*

[14461] I know that the Almighty dwelleth not in temples made with hands, and that it is not the gorgeousness of architecture which will attract His presence, or fix His residence. I am well assured that He will come down as benignantly, and abide as graciously, when His servants have assembled in the rude village church, as when they occupy the splendid cathedral, with its storied aisles, and its fretted roof. But this has nothing to do with the question as to the propriety of our throwing splendour round our religious edifices, whensoever it is in our power to do so: the mean building may have the Shekinah within it, as well as the magnificent; but is this any reason why we should rear only the mean, if we have it in our power to rear the magnificent?—*Ibid.*

[14462] God was content to have a tabernacle whilst His people were in the wilderness, or still harassed by enemies; but when He had given them abundance and peace, He required a temple, a temple of which David, when meditating the structure, could say, "The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical." And when this house rose, it was the wonder of the earth; the gold and the silver and the precious stones were lavished on its walls; and the temple soared into the sky, a glorious mass, refulgent as though it had descended from above, rather than been raised by mortal hands. We forget not the change of dispensation, when we derive from the splendour of the Jewish sanctuary an argument for the duty of beautifying the house of the Lord. But we do think, that when, with every token of approval, the Almighty took possession of a structure on which architecture had exhausted all its power, and wealth poured forth its treasures, He did give evidence that churches, inasmuch as they are buildings reared to His honour, ought to exhibit the opulence of the builders, and thus to be monuments of the readiness of piety to devote to the Lord the riches derived from His bounty.—*Ibid.*

[14463] It is a wise, a salutary, and a laudable provision of the Church's discipline, that she



sites apart, and consecrates, by solemn religious rites, to God's glory the places which she intends for His worship; and by outward signs of decency and reverence, of majesty and holiness, impresses them with an appropriate character, which, whilst it redounds to the honour of God, operates also with no mean or trivial influence on the minds of His people. Connected with this character, and in some degree generated by it, together with an awful veneration for the great Proprietor, a certain secret sense of serene and holy pleasure is diffused over the pious and meditative mind as soon as the feet cross the threshold which separates the house of God from common places. We feel with delight that we are on "holy ground"; and a still small voice within, as we draw near to "worship God in the beauty of holiness," answers in the words of the apostle at the sight of the "excellent glory," "It is good for us to be here."—*Bp. Mant.*

[14464] Respecting Church ordinances, we may remark, first, that they carry no intrinsic value nor sanctity in themselves, but are valuable only for the preservation and increase of faith they tend to produce; neither is a man the more religious or acceptable in the sight of God merely for his assiduities or fervours in them, but for the proficiency he makes by their aid in strengthening his faith, and completing it by addition of the two other virtues. Secondly, that their rectitude and propriety may be tried by observation of the effects they work upon the practisers. If chanting and organs are found to infuse a notion into the populace that God Almighty is delighted or put into better humour with music, they ought certainly to be torn from our services, as a rag of popery; but if no such fancy is entertained by those who use them, who do it only because finding their minds lifted to a greater heartiness in their devotions when accompanied therewith, why should they be pronounced superstitious, while contributing to answer the main end of Divine services, that of working upon the heart?—*A. Tucker.*

[14465] It is as much superstition to imagine that God will not receive our thanksgivings when offered in an harmonious sound, as that He will not receive them without. For He looks into the secret recesses of the heart, and tries the reins, nor is moved this way or that by any undulations of air, whether finely or coarsely modulated. But it is too common for people to judge of others by themselves: if they have been injured from their childhood to dull forms of devotion and rude screamings, they think everything shocking which is shocking to their ears, nor considering that they bring with them that cast of mind which vitiates the performance. —*Ibid.*

[14466] The day is coming back when beauty shall be joined to piety, and when "beauty of holiness" shall be something else besides texts of Old Testament Scripture. The day is coming

when "holiness" shall be written on the bells of the horses; and when every employment shall carry in it some suggestion of nobility, beauty, and piety. This has come about, not simply by the process of reflection, but by the conterminousness of sects. In New England, when I was a boy, there were not, perhaps, enough Roman Catholics to go around as specimens; but there are to-day dense communities of them; and they have noble churches, magnificent cathedrals, and priests as learned, as zealous, and as devout as any that rail at them; and there is scarcely a town in New England where "the mother Church," as she loves to call herself, is not found. There is hardly a village of a thousand inhabitants where the ceremonies of the Reformed or Episcopal Church are not more or less perfectly performed or celebrated year by year. So we have imbibed, little by little, something of the methods of these Churches. To be sure, there are some strenuous Puritans who yet prefer the stone walls of orthodox doctrines that are as hard as granite built up into walls, and that are as unseemly as the fences that separate lot from lot; but I think that even over these stone walls blackberries and vines begin to grow, and beautify them; and even where there are no vines, where the north wind is too strong for them, so long as there is moisture mosses will grow on the stones, and cover them with beauty.—*Ward Beecher.*

[14467] There is a semi-sensuous delight in religious worship imposingly conducted which may be felt by the least conscientious even more than by the sincerely devout. The soul that is devoid of true reverence towards God may be rapt into a spurious elation while in rich and solemn tones the loud-voiced organ peals forth His praise. The heart that never felt one throb of love to Christ may thrill with an ecstasy of sentimental tenderness while soft voices, now blending, now dividing, in combined or responsive strains, celebrate the glories of redeeming love.—*Anon.*

#### XI. COMMON ERRORS CONCERNING PUBLIC WORSHIP.

[14468] (1) One of the most common errors about public worship, is to regard it as an end and not a means. "I have been to church to-day," and so discharged a duty which need be no more thought about. George Herbert says, "The end of preaching is praying;" so we may say the end of public worship is not only spiritual devotion at the time, but holy living and practical application afterwards (John xiii. 17; Jas. i. 22). (2) Another error about public worship is, measuring the benefit gained by the enjoyment felt. But enjoyment is not the highest blessing we are to look for. How often a service we may have enjoyed little at the time, is brought to remembrance afterwards, with great spiritual profit! We need humbling and teaching, as well as cheering. (3) Another error is assigning an undue pro-

minence to preaching as the principal part of Divine worship. No doubt preaching is a blessed ordinance of God's appointment, through which He speaks to the consciences and hearts of men; but it must not be forgotten that God's house is also "the house of prayer" and praise; and as those parts of the service are entered into with devoutness and attention, we rise to the true apprehension of holy worship. (4) Expecting always in preaching to hear something new and striking, and not being satisfied without—"having itching ears," and craving after a service "rendered" with æsthetic taste; going to the house of God to be "pleased," rather than to be brought nearer God, and made a holier, humbler, and better Christian. (5) Losing sight of the important distinction between public and private worship; as if we were praying by ourselves alone, and not as part of the congregation, with whom we join in heart and voice.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[For "EFFICACY OF PRAYER," see Vol. I., Section I., Division F., No. 124.]

## 8

## READING OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

### I. SUBLIME CHARACTER OF THE SCRIPTURES.

#### 1 Their Divine origin.

[14469] Whence but from heaven could men,  
unskill'd in arts,

In several ages born, in several parts,  
Weave such agreeing truths? or how or why  
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?  
Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,  
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.  
—*Dryden.*

[14470] This Book, this holy Book, on every  
line  
Mark'd with the seal of high divinity,  
On every leaf bedew'd with drops of love  
Divine, and with the eternal heraldry  
And signature of God Almighty stamp'd  
From first to last; this ray of sacred light,  
This lamp, from off the everlasting throne,  
Mercy took down, and in the night of Time  
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow;  
And evermore beseeching men with tears  
And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live.  
—*Pollak.*

[14471] As a poem, moral and didactic, it is  
a repertory of Divine instincts—a collection of  
the deepest intuitions of truth, beauty, justice,  
holiness—the past, the present, the future—  
which, by their far vision, the power by which  
they have stamped themselves on the belief  
and heart, the hopes and fears, the days and nights  
of humanity; their superiority to aught else in  
the thoughts or words of man, their consistency

with themselves, their progressive and their  
close-drawn connection with those marvellous  
and unshaken facts, are proved Divine in a  
sense altogether peculiar and alone.—*Giffillan.*

#### 2 Their beauty.

[14472] I have carefully and regularly perused these Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that the volume, independently of its Divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever language they may have been written.—*Sir William Jones.*

[14473] There is not a book on earth so favourable to all the kind, and all the sublime affections, or so unfriendly to hatred and persecution—to tyranny, injustice, and every sort of malevolence, as the gospel. It breathes nothing throughout but mercy, benevolence, and peace. . . Such of the doctrines of the gospel as are level to human capacity appear to be agreeable to the purest truth and soundest morality. All the genius and learning of the heathen world, all the penetration of Pythagoras, Socrates, and Aristotle, had never been able to produce such a system of moral duty, and so rational an account of Providence and of man, as is to be found in the New Testament.—*Beattie.*

[14474] I use the Scriptures not as an arsenal to be resorted to only for arms and weapons, but as a matchless temple, where I delight to contemplate the beauty, the symmetry, and the magnificence of the structure, and to increase my awe and excite my devotion to the Deity there preached and adored.—*Boyle.*

#### 3 Their fulness and variety.

[14475] It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter: it is all pure, all sincere; nothing too much, nothing wanting.—*Locke.*

[14476] The Bible resembles an extensive and highly cultivated flower garden, where there is a vast variety and profusion of fruits and flowers, some of which are more essential or more splendid than others; but there is not a blade suffered to grow in it which has not its use and beauty in the system. Salvation for sinners is the grand truth presented everywhere, and in all points of light; but the *pure in heart* sees a thousand traits of the Divine character, of himself, and of the world: some striking and bold—others cast as it were into the shade, and designed to be searched for and examined; some, direct others by way of intimation or inference.—*Cecil.*

[14477] The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying.—*Flavel.*

[14478] A stream where alike the elephant may swim and the lamb may wade.—*Gregory the Great.*

## 4 Their incomparable value.

(1) *As the guide of life.*

[14479] It is a belief in the Bible, the fruit of deep meditation, which has served me as the guide of my moral and literary life. I have found it a capital safely invested, and richly productive of interest.—*Goethe*.

[14480] The most learned, acute, and diligent student cannot, in the longest life, obtain an entire knowledge of this one volume. The more deeply he works the mine, the richer and more abundant he finds the ore; new light continually beams from this source of heavenly knowledge, to direct the conduct, and illustrate the work of God and the ways of men; and he will at least leave the world confessing that the more he studied the Scriptures, the fuller conviction he had of his own ignorance, and of their inestimable value.—*Sir Walter Scott*.

[14481] To beings situated as we are, to immortal accountable sinful creatures hastening to eternity, to the tribunal of a justly offended God, what is wealth, what is liberty, what is life itself compared with such information as the Scriptures afford, compared with instructions which make many wise unto salvation, compared with that knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ which is eternal life?—*Dr. Payson*.

(2) *As the one support in death.*

[14482] There is no book upon which we can rest in a dying moment but the Bible.—*Selden*.

## II. NECESSITY OF READING THE SCRIPTURES.

## 1 Because the Word of God is to be esteemed "more than our necessary food."

(1) *As the communication of God to immortal creatures.*

[14483] Esau, the carnal man, is ready to die if all his sensual cravings are not satiated. Jacob, the spiritual man, can deny himself anything, give up every outward thing, for purchasing the Divine blessing, and gaining the chief place in the favour of God. Oh, let us learn of him to see that "man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;" and so to subdue the flesh to the Spirit that we may ever obey the motions of righteousness and true holiness.

Say, then, how poor and little worth  
Are all those glittering toys of earth,  
That lure us here;  
Dreams of a sleep that Death must break,  
Alas! before it bids us wake,  
Ye disappear.—*Maurique*.

[14484] What is the compensation for God's sustained and systematic invisibility! Revelation. God has made the Bible supply the place of open "vision," and constituted it its sole re-

presentative in a world where He thinks it improper to show Himself. What, then, must be the excellency and the authority of a book which compensates for the invisibility of a God! How august and sublime must be the oracles to which the Governor of all worlds has committed the manifestation of His character, and the promulgation of His will in this world! The Bible is appointed to do, and does, what archangels could not perform better, were they to take their stand nightly upon the nearest stars, and speak down to the listening earth. Amazing consideration! God had an infinite variety of ways in which to reveal Himself; and yet He fixed upon the single and simple form of a written message as the best: thus rendering the Bible His accredited substitute.—*Evangelist*.

(2) *As containing beyond and above everything else "the testimony of Jesus."*

[14485] A man may find much amusement in the Bible: variety of prudential instruction; abundance of sublimity and poetry; but if he stops there, he stops short of its great end; for "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The grand secret in the study of the Scriptures is, to discover Jesus Christ therein, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."—*Cecil*.

## 2 Because the Christian faith is thus best defended.

[14486] The Christian faith has been, and is still, very fiercely and obstinately attacked. How many efforts have been and are still made; how many books, serious or frivolous, able or silly, have been and are spread incessantly, in order to destroy it in men's minds! Where has this redoubtable struggle been supported with the greatest energy and success? and where has Christian faith been best defended? There where the reading of the Sacred Books is a general and assiduous part of public worship—there where it takes place in the interior of families and in solitary meditation. It is the Bible, the Bible itself, which combats and triumphs most efficaciously in the war between incredulity and unbelief.—*Guizot*.

## III. MANNER OF READING THE SCRIPTURES.

## 1 Negatively considered.

(1) *Not as an ordinary duty.*

[14487] To read the Word is no ordinary duty, but the mother of all duty, enlightening the eyes and converting the soul, and creating that very conscience to which we would subject it. We take our meat, not by duty—the body must go down to dust without it—therefore we persevere, because we love to exist. So also the Word of God is the bread of life, the good of all spiritual action, without which the soul will go down—if not to instant annihilation—to the wretched abyss of spiritual and eternal death.—*Irving*.



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(2) *Not for purposes of controversy or curiosity.*

[14488] There are many persons, of combative tendencies, who read for ammunition, and dig out of the Bible iron for balls. They read, and they find nitre and charcoal and sulphur for powder. They read, and they find cannon. They read, and they make port-holes and embrasures. And if a man does not believe as they do they look upon him as an enemy, and let fly the Bible at him to demolish him. So men turn the Word of God into a vast arsenal, filled with all manner of weapons, offensive and defensive.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[14489] The Bible is God's chart for you to steer by, to keep you from the bottom of the sea, and to show you where the harbour is, and how to reach it without running on rocks or bars. If you have been reading it to gratify curiosity; or to see if you could not catch a universalist; or to find a knife with which to cut up a Unitarian; or for the purpose of setting up or taking down a bishop; or to establish or overthrow any sect—if you have been reading it so, then stop. It is God's medicine-book. You are sick. You are mortally struck through with disease. There is no human remedy for your trouble. But here is God's medicine-book. If you read it for life, for growth in righteousness, then blessed is your reading; but if you read it for disputation and dialectical ingenuities, it is no more to you than Bacon's "Novum Organum" would be.—*Ibid.*

[14490] When I sit in my house, where there is no gale, and with no ship, and look at a chart out of curiosity, I read it as you sometimes read your Bible. You say, "Here is the headland of depravity, and there is a lighthouse.—'Born again'; and here is the channel of duty." And yet every one has charge of a ship—the human soul. Evil passions are fierce winds that are driving it. This Bible is God's chart for us to steer by, to keep us from the bottom of the sea, and to show us where the harbour is, and how to reach it without running on rocks or bars. It is the book of life; it is the book of everlasting life; so take heed how you read it. In reading it, see that you have the truth, and not the mere semblance of it. You cannot live without it. You die for ever unless you have it to teach you what are your relations to God and eternity. May God guide you away from all cunning appearances of truth set to deceive men, and make you love the real truth! Above all other things, may God make you honest in interpreting it, and applying it to your daily life and disposition!—*Ibid.*

## 2 Positively considered.

(1) *With freedom from prejudice.*

[14491] A distempered eye sees the object of that colour with which itself is affected; and a mind prepossessed will be ready to impose its own sense upon the Word, and so loseth the

truth by an overweening conceit of his own opinion.—*Gurnall.*

[14492] When thou consultest with the Word, take heed thou comest not with a judgment pre-engaged to any party and opinion. He is not like to hold the scales even whose judgment is bribed beforehand.—*Anon.*

(2) *With a consciousness and constant remembrance of our great need of it.*

[14493] "Though," as one expresses it, "God Himself has vouchsafed to commence Author, how few will so much as give His work the reading!" The renowned Scipio Africanus hardly ever had Xenophon's writings out of his hand. Alexander the Great made Homer's poems his constant companion. St. Chrysostom was so fond of Aristophanes' comedies that he even laid them under his pillow when he slept. Our matchless Alfred constantly carried "Boethius de Consol. Phil." in a fold of his robe. Bishop Jewel could recite all Horace, and Bishop Sanderson all Tully's offices. . . . The famous Liebnitz could repeat, even in extreme old age, the greatest part of Virgil; and one of the Popes is said to have learned English purely for the sake of reading the "Spectator" in its original language. How warmly does Horace recommend the study of the Greek writers to the Roman youth! *Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ.* How, then, ought Christians to study the Book of God? Beza, at upwards of eighty years of age, could repeat the whole of St. Paul's Epistles in the original Greek, and all the Psalms in Hebrew; and even more lately the learned Witsius, at a very advanced age, could recite almost any passage of Scripture in its proper Hebrew or Greek, together with the contexts and criticisms of the last commentators. How will such persons rise in judgment against the negligent professors, the many superficial divines, and the flimsy infidels of the present day!—*Anon.*

(3) *Comprehensively and as a whole.*

[14494] Walk all up and down this Bible domain. Try every path. Plunge in at the Prophecies and come out at the Epistles. Go with the patriarchs, until you meet the evangelists. Rummage and ransack, as children who are not satisfied when they come to a new house, until they know what is in every room, and into what every door opens. Open every jewel-casket. Examine the skylights. For ever be asking questions. Put to a higher use than was intended the Oriental proverb, "Hold all the skirts of thy mantle extended when heaven is raining gold."

Passing from Cologne to Bonn on the Rhine, the scenery is comparatively tame. But from Bonn to Mayence it is enchanting. You sit on deck, and feel as if this last flash of beauty must exhaust the scene; but in a moment there is a turn of the river, which covers up the former view with more luxuriant vineyards, and more defiant castles, and bolder bluffs, vine-wreathed,

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and grapes so ripe that if the hills be touched they would bleed their rich life away into the bowels of Bingen and Hockheimer. Here and there there are streams of water melting into the river, like smaller joys swallowed in the bosom of a great gladness. And when night begins to throw its black mantle over the shoulder of the hills, and you are approaching disembarkation at Mayence, the lights along the shore fairly bewitch the scene with their beauty, giving one a thrill that he feels but once, yet that lasts him for ever. So this river of God's Word is not a straight stream, but a winding splendour—at every turn new wonders to attract, still richer vantage pressing to the brink, and crowded with castles of strength—Stolzenfels and Johannisberger as nothing compared with the strong tower into which the righteous run and are saved—and our disembarkation at last, in the evening, amid the lights that gleam from the shore of heaven. The trouble is that the vast majority of Bible voyagers stop at Cologne, where the chief glories begin.

The sea of God's Word is not like Genesaret, twelve miles by six, but boundless; and in any one direction you can sail on for ever. Why then confine yourself to a short Psalm, or to a few verses of an Epistle? The largest fish are not near the shore. Hoist all sail to the winds of heaven. Take hold of both oars and pull away. Be like some of the whalers that go off from New Bedford or Portsmouth to be gone for two or three years. Yea, calculate on a lifetime voyage. You do not want to land until you land in heaven. Sail away, O ye mariners, for eternity. *Launch out into the deep.—Talmage.*

[14495] An over-subtle scrutiny of the words of a sentence sometimes impairs our perception of its force. Nor are the inspired sentences of Holy Scripture exceptions to this rule. As by dissecting a dead body in an anatomy school you could gain no notion of the contour, general bearing, and power of the living body; as by bringing a microscope to bear upon the vein of an insect's wing you could form no just conception of that insect, as it disports itself in the summer sun; so by entering with too great minuteness into the language of Holy Scripture it is possible to miss (or at least to apprehend but feebly) its great purport.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[14496] As many locks, whose wards differ, are opened with equal care by one master-key, so there is a certain comprehensive view of Scriptural truth which opens hard places, solves objections, and happily reconciles, illustrates, and harmonizes many texts, which to those who have not this master-key, frequently styled "the analogy of faith," appear little less than contradictory to each other. When we obtain this key, we shall be sure to obtain the right sense.—*Leifchild.*

(4) *As a letter from a heavenly Father.*

[14497] Read the Scripture not only as a

history, but as a love-letter sent to you from God, which may affect your hearts.—*Watson.*

(5) *With reverence and humility.*

[14498] Open the Bible with holy reverence as the Book of God, indited by the Holy Ghost. Remember that the doctrine of the New Testament was revealed by the Son of God, who was purposely sent from heaven to be the light of the world, and to make known to men the will of God, and the matters of their salvation. Bethink you well, if God should but send a book or letter to you by an angel, how reverently you would receive it! How carefully you would peruse it, and regard it above all the books in the world! And how much rather should you do so, by that book which is indited by the Holy Ghost, and recordeth the doctrine of Christ Himself, whose authority is greater than the angels! Read it not, therefore, as a common book, with a common and irreverent heart; but in the dread and love of God the author.

Remember that it is the will and testament of your Lord, and the covenant of most full and gracious promises; which all your comforts and all your hopes of pardon and everlasting life are built upon. Read it, therefore, with love and great delight. Value it a thousandfold more than you would do the letters of your dearest friend, or the deeds by which you hold your lands; or anything else of low concernment. If the law were sweeter to David than honey, and better than thousands of gold and silver, and was his delight and meditation all the day—oh, what should be the sweet and precious gospel to us!

Remember that it is a doctrine of unseen things, and of the greatest mysteries; and therefore come not to it with arrogance as a judge, but with humility as a learner or disciple; and if anything seem difficult or improbable to you, suspect your own unfurnished understanding, and not the sacred Word of God. If a learner in any art or science will suspect his teacher and his books, whenever he is stalled, or meeteth with that which seemeth unlikely to him, his pride would keep possession, for his ignorance and his folly were like to be unenviable.—*R. Baxter.*

[14499] What abundance of seeming contradictions in Scripture do rise up in the eyes of an ignorant infidel; as strange apparitions do to a distracted man, or as many colours before the inflamed or distempered eye. These self-conceited, ignorant souls do imagine all to be impossible which exceedeth their knowledge; and because they cannot see the sweet consent of Scripture, and how those places do suit and fortify each other, which to them seem to contradict each other, therefore they think no one else can see it; no, not God Himself. One way of reading the Bible with advantage is to pay it great homage; so that when we come to any part which we cannot connect with other passages, we must conclude that this

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[READING OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.]

arises from our ignorance, but that the seeming contrarieties are in themselves quite reconcilable.—*Cecil*.

[14500] When we read the Bible we must always remember that, like the holy waters seen by Ezekiel (chap. xlvii.), it is in some places "up to the ankles," in others "up to the knees," in others "up to the loins," and in some "a river too deep to be fathomed," and that "cannot be passed over." There is light enough to guide the humble and teachable to heaven, and obscurity enough to confound the unbeliever.—*Ibid*.

(6) *With earnest diligence.*

[14501] Not unfrequently the most precious things are the most difficult to attain. Iron and coal and gold do not lie on the surface of the ground; they have to be sought for carefully and with great trouble. The earth does not yield her choicest life-giving products—her corn, her wine, her oil—without much painstaking skill on the part of the husbandman. So with the Bible. Some of its highest truths by no means lie on the surface. They are there most certainly, and they are to be found; but they need patient investigation, and humble, prayerful thought, in order that they may be discovered.—*Hooper*.

[14502] "Search the Scriptures." Indeed, were there not such an express word for this duty, yet the very penning of them, with the end for which they are writ considered, would impose the duty upon us. When a law is enacted by a prince or state, for their subjects to obey, the very promulgation of it is enough to oblige the people to take notice of it. Neither will it serve a subject's turn that breaks this law to say he was ignorant of any such law being in force: the publication of it bound him to inquire after it. What other end have lawgivers in divulging their Acts, but that their people might know their duty?—*Gurnall*.

[14503] Prize the Scriptures, and be more diligent in hearing, reading, meditating on the blessed truths contained therein. The earth is the fruitful mother of all herbs and plants, yet it must be tilled, ploughed, harrowed, and dressed, else it brings forth little fruit. The Scriptures contain all the grounds of comfort and happiness; but we have little benefit unless daily versed in reading, hearing, and meditation.—*Manton*.

(7) *With spirituality.*

[14504] The Bible is a book for the heart and for the life; not to be read only intellectually and critically (though this is most important in its place), but with devout simplicity as the Word of life, the book by which God holds communion with our spirits and reveals His will to us.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

(8) *With prayerful meditation.*

[14505] To some the Bible is unprofitable  
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and uninteresting because they read too fast. Amongst the insects which subsist on the sweet sap of flowers, there are two very different classes. One is remarkable for its imposing plumage, which shows in the sunbeams like the dust of gems; and as you watch its jauntily gyrations over the fields, and its minuet dance from flower to flower, you cannot help admiring its graceful activity, for it is plainly getting over a great deal of ground. But in the same field there is another worker, whose brown vest and business-like, straightforward flight may not have arrested your eye. If the flower-cup be deep, he goes down to the bottom; if its dragon-mouth be shut, he thrusts its lips asunder; and if the nectar be peculiar or recondite, he explores all about it till he discovers it, and then, having ascertained the knack of it, joyful as one who has found great spoil, he sings his way down into its luscious recesses. His rival of the painted velvet wing has no patience for such dull and long-winded details. But what is the end? Why, the one died last October along with the flowers; the other is warm in his hive to-night, amidst the fragrant stores which he gathered beneath the bright beams of summer.—*Anon*.

(9) *With appropriating faith.*

[14506] Job uses the language of appropriation. He says, "My Redeemer." And all that we know, or hear, or speak of Him, will avail us but little, unless we are really and personally interested in Him as our Redeemer. A cold speculative knowledge of the gospel, such as a lawyer has of a will or a deed, which he reads with no further design than to understand the tenor and import of the writing, will neither save nor comfort the soul. The believer reads it, as the will is read by the heir, who finds his own name in it, and is warranted by it to call the estate and all the particulars specified his own. He appropriates the privileges to himself, and says, the promises are mine; the pardon, the peace, the heaven, of which I read, are all mine. This is the will and testament of the Redeemer, of my Redeemer. The great Testator remembered me in His will, which is confirmed, and rendered valid by His death (Heb. ix. 16), and therefore I humbly claim, and assuredly expect, the benefit of all that He has bequeathed.—*Newton*.

#### IV. FREQUENCY OF READING THE SCRIPTURES.

[14507] Read your Bible daily, and make its doctrines the constant rule of your faith, and its precepts the constant rule of your practice.—*Dale*.

[14508] He who prizes Christ and the things of Christ will need no whip and spur to drive him to the Bible. He in whose thoughts its words rise hourly will contrive to turn some of its pages daily. A letter from a loving friend in a far-off land is not read once only, and then



cast aside, but is read and re-read, and read again.—*M. J.*

## V. THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE.

### 1 The Bible must be its own interpreter.

[14509] Compare Scripture with Scripture. False doctrines, like false witnesses, agree not among themselves.—*Gurnall*.

[14510] The Scripture is to be its own interpreter, or rather the Spirit speaking in it; nothing can cut the diamond but the diamond; nothing can interpret Scripture but Scripture.—*Watson*.

### 2 It opens to affection's eye.

[14511] There are thousands of men who enter the Word of God, the library of Divine knowledge, and find nothing. They bring nothing, and therefore they cannot find anything. This interprets the mystic saying, "Unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away." A man may be able to read, and there may be wondrous stores, and yet to him there may be nothing, if he is looking for something besides that which is provided. If he is looking for amusing tales, or for literature that shall stimulate a low taste, and give it gratification, when he comes out he will know almost nothing of the treasures within. So men read the Bible, and think it a dry book. It is not a book opened to them. That is, they are not opened up to it. With strange wonder children behold the grandmother and grandfather who sit lost and rejoicing in a kind of rapture over God's Word; and stealthily they look to see what it is, and where it is; and when the grandfather or grandmother is gone, they open the book to the right page, and read the contents, and marvel that there is nothing there. The father reads it, and tears run down his cheek; the child reads it, and no tear runs down its cheek. There are Psalms over which they that have walked through trouble hang in perpetual rejoicing; others go to those same Psalms, to whom they are as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. There be men that find in God's Word all stores for the heart, and there be other men that, looking into that Word, find nothing at all. Men find what they bring—that, the interpretation of which they have within themselves.—*H. W. Beecher*.

### 3 Special experiences sometimes unlock special truths.

[14512] There are many parts of Scripture that are, as it were, locks, and that are never opened except by some special key. We may read them, and read them again, just as a man may turn a padlock in his hand over and over; but it is not until some precise mood comes, it is not until definite experience is given to us, it is not until we pierce the Scripture with some particular line of thought, that it opens to us, and a passage that before has seemed simple

and of no remarkable significance, is disclosed to us with such richness and with such wondrous beauty, that we are filled with surprise. It required just that peculiar train of experience. No other would have fitted the lock. A hundred keys may be brought to a door, but only one of all is good for anything. The others are keys, but they will not open that lock or that door. You may go with a hundred moods to different parts of Scripture, and there shall be but one that is fit to at all interpret any particular part.—*Ibid.*

## VI. THE MYSTERIES, OBSCURITIES, AND DIFFICULTIES OF THE SCRIPTURES.

### 1 Are not to be denied.

[14513] Those huge boulders which lie along the valley of Storo in the Tyrol are of a granite unknown in the neighbourhood; they must have come from a great distance. Now it might be hard to explain the method by which they arrived in the valley, but it would be absurd to deny that they are there. Most unaccountable is the fact, but a very strong and stubborn fact it is, for there they lie, huge as houses, and yet perfectly alien to the country. There are truths in Scripture which puzzle us, we cannot understand their relation to other portions of revelation, they are mysteries, apparently alien to the spirit of other passages. What then? Suppose we cannot account for them, that does not alter the fact that there they are, and it would be extreme folly to deny their existence because they puzzle us. Rather let us find room for adoring faith where reason is lost in wonder.—*Spurgeon*.

### 2 Do not extend to anything essential for us to know.

[14514] God has revealed great mysteries sufficient for saving faith, though not to satisfy rash curiosity. There is a knowledge of curiosity and discourse, and a knowledge of doing and performance. The art of navigation requires a knowledge how to govern a ship, and what seas are safe, what are dangerous by rocks and sands and tempests, that often surprise those who sail to them; but the knowledge of the causes of the ebbing and flowing of the sea is not necessary. The mariner must be instructed in the nature and use of the compass, but a knowledge of the mysterious nature of the loadstone is not required of him. So, to believe savingly in Christ, we must know that He is the living and true God, and true man, that died for our redemption; but 'tis not necessary that we should know the manner of the union of His two natures. The discovery of the manner of Divine mysteries is not suitable to the nature of faith, for 'tis the evidence of things not seen; the obscurity of the object is consistent with the certainty of the assent to it; and 'tis contrary to the end of revelation; which is to humble us in the modest ignorance of Divine mysteries

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which we cannot comprehend, and to enlighten us in those things which are necessary to be known. The light of faith is as much below the light of glory, as 'tis above the light of nature.—*Anon.*

### 3 May be easily traced to intelligible sources.

[14515] The difficulties and obscurities of Scripture arise from the grandeur of the subject; the difficulty of expression; the weakness of our understanding; from men's ignorance, prejudice, and presumption.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

## VII. ANSWER OF THE SCRIPTURES TO THE PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE.

[14516] "To whom are the heavens above me, the world which I inhabit, and the various objects with which it is filled, indebted for their existence?"

A mild, but majestic voice replies from the oracle, "In the beginning, God created the heavens, and the earth, and all that is therein."

Startled by the scarcely expected answer, the inquirer eagerly exclaims, "Who is God? what is His nature, His character, His attributes?"

"God," replies the voice, "is a Spirit: He is from everlasting to everlasting, without beginning of days and end of years; and with Him is no variableness, nor shadow of turning: He fills heaven and earth: He searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men; He is the only wise, the almighty, the high and holy, and just one: He is Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; but one who will by no means clear the guilty."

The inquirer's mind labours, sinks, faints, while vainly attempting to grasp the illimitable, incomprehensible Being. But a new and more powerful motive now stimulates his inquiries, and with augmented interest he asks, "Does any relation or connection subsist between this God and myself?"

"He is thy Maker," returns the oracle, "the Father of thy spirit, and thy preserver: He it is who giveth thee richly all things to enjoy: He is thy Sovereign, thy Lawgiver, and thy Judge: in Him thou dost live, and move, and exist; nor can any one deliver thee out of His hands; and when, at death, thy dust shall return to earth as it was, thy spirit will return to God who gave it."

"How," resumes the inquirer, "will He then receive me?"

"He will reward thee according to thy works."

"What are the works," the inquirer asks, "which this Sovereign requires of me?"

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. Every transgression of this law is a sin; and the soul that sinneth shall die."

"Have I sinned?" the inquirer tremblingly asks.

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, thou hast not glorified."

With increased anxiety the inquirer asks, "Is there any way in which the pardon of sin may be obtained?"

"The blood of Jesus Christ," replies the oracle, "cleanseth from all sin. He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy."

"But to whom shall I confess them?" the inquirer resumes; "where shall I find the God whom I have offended, that I may acknowledge my transgressions, and implore His mercy?"

"He is a God at hand," returns the voice: "He is not far from thee: I, who speak to thee, am He."

"God be merciful to me a sinner!" exclaims the inquirer, smiting upon his breast, and not daring to lift his eyes towards the oracle. "What, Lord, wilt Thou have me to do?"

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," answers the voice, "and thou shalt be saved."

"Lord, who is Jesus Christ, that I may believe on Him?"

"He is My beloved Son, whom I have set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood: hear thou Him, for there is salvation in no other."—*Dr. Payson.*

## 9

## PREACHING OF THE WORD

### I. DEFINITION AND NATURE OF PREACHING.

[14517] Preaching is not the communication of information, the transfer of a dead sum or capital of facts or theories from one mind to another, but the opening of living fountains within the heart, the scattering of sparks which shall kindle where they fall; the planting of seeds of truth, which shall take root in the new soil where they are cast, and striking their roots downward, and sending their branches upward, shall grow up into goodly trees.—*Abb. Trench.*

[14518] Preaching is . . . to struggle with ignorance, and discover to the inquiring minds of the masses the clear cerulean blue of heavenly truth.—*H. Ballou.*

[14519] Preaching is an institute peculiar to the gospel. It is an agency, previously unknown, which Christianity has created for itself to be its chosen mode of utterance. Jesus and His messengers are, therefore, the only preachers. Just as the gospel has been truly apprehended, has it sought expression purely through this form. Rationalize it into a philosophy on the one hand, and the pulpit becomes a tribune to lecture from; mistake it on the other for a magical mystery or standing exhibition of wonders, and the pulpit is deserted for the altar. But Christianity is neither, in Paul's language,

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"a wisdom" for "Greeks," nor "a sign" for "Jews"; neither a philosophy nor a thaumaturgy; it is a gospel from God to men, and for a Divine message preaching must ever be the appropriate vehicle.—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

## II. ITS ORIGIN.

[14520] Pentecost gave tongues to the disciples. On that day Christ, fully gifted after crucifixion, sent down the Holy Ghost from heaven; and the gospel, round and whole, a perfect thing, descended, as it were, and alighted among men. That was the birthday of preaching. The new message brought new utterance. It created spokesmen of its own. It has never since ceased to create them; and the times of religious awakening in the history of the Church, when her enthusiasm has been revived and her conquests widened, have been signalized by a fresh development of preaching gifts.—*Ibid.*

[14521] It admits of little question that preaching took its rise from the public reading of the Scriptures. No one needs to be informed how regularly this formed a part of the synagogue service. The case of our Lord's expositions in this way is too familiar to bear recital. The apostles, and Paul in particular, seem to have followed the same method. Indeed, this may be taken as the rule, while free utterances, like that at Mars' Hill, are considered as the exceptions.—*Biblical Repertory.*

## III. ITS DIVINE WARRANT.

[14522] "Go ye and preach the gospel." Here is the Divine warrant for the ordinance of preaching. No Church neglects it without incurring grievous loss. A philosophy which never proclaimed its doctrines would dwindle and decay. A Church whose ministers are dumb dogs is unlike the Church of the apostles.—*Abb. Tail.*

## IV. ITS PURPOSE AND DESIGN.

To turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

[14523] The object of preaching is, constantly to remind mankind of what mankind are constantly forgetting; not to supply the defects of human intelligence, but to fortify the feebleness of human resolutions; to recall mankind from the by-paths where they turn, into that broad path of salvation which all know, but few tread.—*Sydney Smith.*

[14524] To *compel* man to recognize the huge contrasts of his spiritual life. True kinship with angels, yet voluntary connection with devils!—tremendous capacities for greatness, yet awful bias towards guilt!—the repulsive loathsomeness of sin and the undefiled Saviour of sinners!—*A. M. A. W.*

[14525] Preaching has to do exclusively with

such a personal administration of the truth as shall make one man's soul a living fire by which another man's soul is kindled.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[14526] There is one element in the work of the preacher which belongs distinctively to him, which will for ever give him a place and a function, which does not change, and which can never change—namely, the bringing of the truth home to men in a living form. This clearly marks out the genius and the sphere of preaching.—*Ibid.*

[14527] Our high mission, our noble calling, is to build up souls, to perfect the Christian life, and to make manhood acceptable to God, and radiant in the sight of all men.—*Ibid.*

[14528] The design of preaching has been greatly mistaken, when it has been thought it must still acquaint them who live (and especially who have long lived) under it with some new thing. Its much greater and more important design is, the impressing of known things (but too little considered) upon the hearts of hearers, that they may be delivered up into the mould and form of the doctrine taught them; and may so learn Christ, as more and more to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and put off the old man and put on the new. The digesting our food is what God now eminently calls for.—*J. Howe.*

[14529] What is the work in question? The work is to awaken men's consciences, to bring souls captive to the obedience of Christ. It is to persuade poor sinners, desperately lost, to accept an unhopèd-for and indispensable substitution. This is the work in hand. This it is which alone will rejoice the angels in heaven. This alone it is which for eighteen centuries upon earth has been called evangelization.—*F. Coulin.*

[14530] Never forget that the end of a sermon is the salvation of the people.—*M'Cheyne.*

## V. ITS NECESSITY.

[14531] In looking forward through the course of the future generations of our race, we see them constantly subject to a number of great and urgent wants which must be supplied; and we instantly see *how* they will be supplied. We see a long succession of the produce of the earth—diffusive verdure and ripening harvests, all the labours and rewards of agriculture; also the mechanical and many other arts. They will also want government and legislation; and there is no fear that the supply of this should ever fail. But they will want to be taught religion; and how must this want be supplied? There will always be the Bible, numbers of instructive books, domestic teaching in serious families, and that occasional instruction which wise and religious men will be giving to those around them: there will, moreover, be the instructive admonitory events of Providence—



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dispensations which express great truths, display the Divine attributes, and illustrate the great maxims of eternal justice. But there must also be a continuance of the old tried expedient of preaching. It was in use under the ancient dispensation : it has been the grand instrument in promoting Christianity ; and it is to be employed through all nations and ages. It is quite a natural rational expedient for maintaining and promoting religion among mankind. It is in the very plainest order of means.—*Foster*.

## V. ITS ADVANTAGES.

### 1 General.

[4532] One mind, at one act, conveys ideas into a multitude and diversity of minds, like a shower. The multitude consents to become as one person to hear one ; suspending all their diverse individual employments, that they may in a large company meet him, an individual. What a vast expense of the preacher's labour it would have been to have said so much to so many persons taken individually or in families ! An immeasurable labour which must have worn months and years away ! And indeed if the instructor could—according to some of the wild fantasies of the Hindoo mythology—become *many men* for the work, there would not be found any opportunity for the private instruction of all these auditors. Beside, he can say what he thinks may be useful to each one, far more freely and boldly, when he is to say it to several hundreds, than he could to almost any individual.—*Ibid*.

[4533] Another advantage of this administration of religious instruction to a great number together is : it makes all to be witnesses to all that they have heard it. Nor is this all. It tends to secure that religion shall be made a subject of regular study, of deep and prolonged thought, in some part of the community.—*Ibid*.

### 2 Special.

*It is the preaching of the Word which ordinarily produces the reading.*

[4534] It is commonly in consequence of something which has been heard in the sanctuary that a man is induced to betake himself to the study of the Bible ; a text has been driven home to his conscience, as uttered by the minister of Christ, and then he has opened and examined the book, a line of which could penetrate with so mysterious a force. But Bibles without preachers would, for the most part, be Bibles without readers ; and even where readers were found, we have little warrant for thinking that much conversion would ensue.—*H. Melvill, B.D.*

## VII. ITS DIFFICULTIES.

[4535] Needs must it sit heavily on their spirits, that, being in God's prime intention, and their own, selected heralds of peace, and dis-

pensers of treasures inestimable, without price, to them that have no peace, they find in the discharge of their commission that they are made the greatest variance and offence—a very sword and fire both in house and city over the whole earth. This is that which the sad prophet Jeremiah laments : “Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me, a man of strife and contention.” And although Divine inspiration must certainly have been sweet to those ancient prophets, yet the irksomeness of that truth which they brought was so unpleasant unto them that everywhere they call it a burden. Yea, that mysterious book of Revelation, which the great evangelist was bid to eat, as it had been some eye-brightening electuary of knowledge and foresight, though it were sweet in his mouth and in the learning, it was bitter in his belly, bitter in the denouncing. Nor was this hid from the wise poet Sophocles, who in that place of his tragedy where Tiresias is called to resolve king Œdipus in a matter which he knew would be grievous, brings him in bemoaning his lot that he knew more than other men. For surely to every good and peaceable man it must in nature needs be a hateful thing to be the displeaser and molester of thousands ; much better would it like him doubtless to be the messenger of gladness and contentment, which is his chief intended business to all mankind, but that they resist and oppose their own true happiness.—*Milton*.

## VIII. ITS ENCOURAGEMENTS.

### 1 As regards the message itself.

[4536] It is a great source of encouragement to the preacher to feel that he has conscience on his side. He does not feel it necessary to stop at every stage that he may build up a laboured argument as to the truth of the positions which he has laid down or announced ; he is not compelled to be for ever busy with the process of demonstration, as though what he uttered had no self-evidencing power, but must be fenced about with an array of credentials, or he could not otherwise look to gain assent to its truthfulness. He knows that the message which he delivers carries with it its own proof ; so that while he might be casting about for methods by which to introduce it and secure for it an attentive and impartial hearing, it has gone straightway into the recesses of the mind, and there extorted a confession, however unwillingly rendered, and however speedily forgotten, of its being precisely such as the Almighty might be expected to send.—*Melville*.

### 2 As regards the results of the message.

[4537] We know that God does work miracles of grace through the weakness of our preaching. We know that this setting forth of His word, to be brought home to the hearts of the listeners by His mighty grace, according to the sovereign working of His blessed will, is, and has been ever since St. Peter preached at Pentecost, by far the commonest means by which He does

draw souls to conversion and life.—*Bp. Wilberforce.*

[14538] There has ever been in the doctrine of redemption an efficacy that has surprised even those who have administered it. So forth, it might be said, to one who had undertaken to win souls for Christ, and preach the whole truth without distrust. You may not see how the news that Jesus lived and suffered is to enter into and vehemently move the souls you try and instruct, but for well-nigh two thousand years has the cross of Christ been lifted up, and has been drawing all men unto it. In every congregation there are many secret influences at work, and for each does the work of Christ provide some food or medicine. Ears long closed will be opened when you expect not.—*Abp. Thomson.*

## IX. ITS MODES.

### 1 Extempore sermons.

#### (1) *Its antiquity.*

[14539] Every one must be persuaded that early preaching was without the use of manuscript. It was in regard to expression extemporaneous. Pamphilus relates of Origen that the discourses which he delivered almost daily in church were *extempore*, and that they were taken down by reporters, and so preserved for posterity. We find Chrysostom changing his subject, in consequence of tumults in the street on his way to the public assembly. His discourses, as now extant, contain many observations which plainly arose from the circumstances in which he stood during the delivery; such as the clapping of hands, the shouts heard from the neighbouring hippodrome, and the entrance of attendants to light the lamps. In one instance we find Augustine suddenly taking up a passage which the lector, who it seems was a boy, had read by mistake, instead of the one which the preacher had premeditated. The whole air of his *Sermones* is that of the extemporaneous preacher.—*Biblical Repertory.*

#### (2) *Its advantages as a general rule.*

[14540] An apologetic argument in favour of the Christian religion, or an elaborate and minute exposition of Scripture, addressed to a select audience—an audience trained closely to follow a sustained argument or discussion—may not improperly be read, especially if such discourses are understood to be prepared with a view to publication. But, if the congregation includes persons of commonplace intelligence and character, and especially if it includes those who need to be instructed in the first principles of theology and the general outline of scriptural knowledge, it is certain that read discourses are altogether unfit for these. They need the glance, the pause, the challenge, the gush—the hesitation that piques interest, the sudden impulse and outpouring that takes captive the hearer's sympathy—all that belongs to the vivid play of living speech, in order to secure the conveyance to them of the speaker's full meaning,

and to hold their attention to the sequence and relations of his thoughts.—*London Quarterly Review.*

[14541] Reading is incompatible with the full play of passion and appeal; the impassioned reader is but an orator in chains. Reading is incompatible with action, with all that belongs to the dramatic play of eye, hand, and voice, without which there can be no true oratory.—*Ibid.*

### 2 Written sermons.

[14542] Reading sermons enables the preacher to acquire the oratorical style, without which the extemporiser cannot excel; it checks in some too great an affluence of thought or language; in others it remedies the want of a ready and copious flow of fitting words; it many times protects both speaker and hearer against the effects of hasty and unguarded words in searching and admonitory sermons. It also secures us from the obscurity and misunderstanding caused by those long and complex sentences which the extemporiser is often tempted, if not compelled, to construct. It insures us even against the teasing and distracting fear of blundering and break-downs. And above all, it invests the preacher with the confidence and persuasiveness of one who is delivering matters of intelligent and well-grounded belief, thoughts which he has carefully selected, accurately weighed, and stamped with the authentic marks of his full and permanent approval.—*G. W. Harvey.*

[14543] There are preachers who read their sermons from a godly fear. The paper before their eyes, the exact words, leads to a subdued manner of discourse which is also one of the most effective and powerful; the paper pulls the too impulsive speaker back, reins him in wisely, where otherwise he might trip and stumble, or where he might rush into too bold and irreverent a style of speech.—*Edward Paxton Hood.*

## X. ITS REQUISITES.

### 1 As regards the preacher.

#### (1) *Divine unction.*

While, like other speakers, the preacher has power to inform and excite an audience, he has not power in himself to compass the great aim of preaching.

[14544] A sermon may be constructed after the best models; it may conform to all the rules of homiletics; the text may be suitable and fruitful; the plan may be faultless; the execution may discover genius and judgment; there may be accurate analysis and strong reasoning; proof and motive; solidity and beauty; logic and passion; argument direct and indirect; perspicuity, purity, correctness, propriety, precision; description, antithesis, metaphor, allegory, comparison; motives from goodness, motives from happiness, motives from

self-love; appeals to the sense of the beautiful, the sense of right, to the affections, the passions, the emotions; a sermon may be all this, and yet that very sermon, even though it fell from the lips of a prince of pulpit oratory, were as powerless in the renewal of a soul as in raising of the dead, if unaccompanied by the omnipotent energy of the Holy Ghost.—*Ibid.*

[14545] The tongues were tongues of fire. This fire is, first of all, the Holy Spirit, whose quick, pure, and living presence it denotes. But then it is intimated that the Holy Spirit was to prove Himself fire *in the speech of men*. It is intimated that human minds, as they uttered themselves to their fellows, and human speech in that utterance, were to prove capable of taking fire, so as to brighten and burn with the truth and power of God's Spirit. Such was the kind of preaching that was set a-going at Pentecost, and by it the world was to be won. Other forms of influence were not to be excluded. But this was to have the chief place.—*Principal Rainy.*

[14546] The word of power, coming burning-hot out of the living mouth of a believing man, is the leading form in which the Spirit's presence is evermore to make head in the Church against the world, and is to carry the Church on in her mission in the world. This gives us the fundamental view of our work as preachers; and nothing more is needed in order to illustrate its dignity and glory.—*Ibid.*

[14547] The gifts of the preacher are as gold that adorns the temple; his grace like the temple that sanctifies the gold.—*Burkitt.*

(2) *Self-culture.*

a. As to the most essential training of the spiritual, moral, and intellectual capacities.

[14548] Let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself.—*T. L. Cuyler.*

[14549] If you would lift me, you must be on higher ground.—*R. W. Emerson.*

[14550] I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teachings.—*Shakespeare.*

[14551] The minister is to be a live man, a real man, a true man, a simple man, great in his love, great in his life, great in his work, great in his simplicity, great in his gentleness.—*John Hall.*

[14552] The preacher who deals with the great truths of holy character must impersonate those truths. There is power inherent in truth; but it is often like electricity in a Leyden jar, needing a conductor to develop it. The preacher who best commends the truth of the gospel to his hearers is he who has translated that truth into his own life, until his life is full of it and redolent of it.—*Anon.*

[14553] In these times there is need that our clergy be not only pious but well-read and

(which is sometimes a different thing) well-educated men. It is not right that in our great manufacturing towns of the north it should be in the power of a hired emissary of infidelity to defy with impunity, Sunday after Sunday, by public placard, the ministers of the gospel. It is not right that working men, ignorant perhaps but intelligent and honest-hearted, should be left to grapple as they may, unaided by their pastor, with the scoffs and taunts of the infidel. These things are a new sign of the times, and men must be educated in the full view of them. Nor is it right that, apart from the open avowal of an antichristian purpose, it should be in the power of any writer, unanswered and unexposed, to dress up old objections as if they were new, and to trouble the minds of unlearned believers by assertions which a deeper knowledge would show perhaps to be inaccurate or unfounded.—*Dean Vaughan.*

[14554] Though Jesus chose poor men for the companions of His life, he selected a well-educated and distinguished man to be the greatest preacher of His religion. Such a man, it is evident, as well from station as from acuteness and the natural pride of a highly cultivated intellect, was the last person to become the dupe of credulous enthusiasts, especially when they happened to be low-born and illiterate.—*Guesses at Truth.*

[14555] From such an appointment as that of the Apostle Paul may also be drawn an inference directly in favour of a learned ministry. If some of the apostles had no other human instructor than the best Master that ever lived, Jesus Christ, the one most immediately and supernaturally called by Him to preach the gospel was full of sacred and profane learning.—*Ibid.*

[14556] Much reading will not make a man a good preacher, still less will little reading; but this is certain, that without reading the man is sure to be an indifferent, uninstructional, ineffective preacher. I do not mean that he is necessarily to read much, but he must read really and to the purpose, for however short a time each day; note what he reads, and accustom himself to carry on suggestive trains of thought.—*Abp. Tait.*

[14557] Wherever the encounter is made hand to hand between the ministry of Christ and the ministry of Satan, between truth and falsehood, between faith and infidelity, between righteousness and sin, there is room, and there is a demand, for all gifts. It is only for vague and general and distant dealing that small powers or small efforts can be deemed sufficient. Let a Christian minister single out his man—and it is only in single combat that some of the greatest victories of the ministry can be won—let him propose to himself as a definite object the turning of some sinner from the error of his ways; the recovery of some drunkard to sobriety, of some adulterer to chastity, of some profane man to reverence, of some infidel to faith and to worship;



and assuredly he will find it necessary to try every resource with which skill and persuasiveness can furnish him, as well as that higher and more availing weapon still, which can be taken only by effectual fervent prayer out of the very armoury of God.—*Dean Augustin*.

δ. As to the non-essential, but most important element in pulpit diction—a good delivery.

[14558] It is scarcely necessary to mention the importance of a good delivery. Of all human means, there is not one which contributes more to fix the attention of men, and to move their hearts. Many a discourse which, delivered in a bombastic and monotonous tone, leaves the hearer unmoved, and seems to invite him to allow his thoughts to wander, would have riveted his attention, convinced him and touched him, had it been given as spoken from the soul, with the intonations natural to feeling and reason. It is useless to object that this is a point of form which ought not to take too strong a hold on the Christian orator. Were delivery a secondary thing for the speaker, which it is not (for the state of the soul has more to do with it than is generally thought), there would still remain in it an important element, a capital one, for the hearer, since it has such a powerful influence on his thoughts and dispositions.—*A. Monod*.

[14559] Believe two men who knew something of this matter—Demosthenes and Massillon. The more different the kinds of eloquence in which they have respectively excelled, the weightier the testimony they have rendered to the power of elocution and oratorical action. Demosthenes was asked which was the first quality of the orator. "It is action," answered he. "And the second?" "Action." "And the third?" "Action." Massillon was of the same mind, having said one day to a person who had asked him which was, in his opinion, the best of his sermons: "The one I know best." "Why?" Because the one he knew best he repeated best. We may be allowed to think that these two great masters of art have made too much of this thought, in order to make it more striking; but fundamentally they are quite right. Not only is their opinion true, it is a fact which experience bears out, and which cannot be contested.—*Ibid*.

[14560] The tone of good conversation, but that tone heightened and ennobled, such appears to me the ideal of pulpit delivery.—*Ibid*.

[14561] The power with which some men speak and the truthness of their delivery are owing greatly to the fact that they have been able to make themselves quite at home in a position where others are strange and awkward. If trouble paralyses all the faculties, freedom of mind intensifies them. Of two men who have met some peril, it is not always the more skilful who gets out of it best; it is ordinarily he who keeps all his *sang froid*, and the greatest genius is good for nothing when fear has benumbed him. Were you blessed with the finest faculties,

of what use would they be to you were your mind not free? But he who is full master of himself not only says what he wishes, but says it *as* he wishes, reflects, stops an instant, if necessary, to find a word or a thought, even borrows from that suspension an intonation or a gesture natural and expressive, takes advantage from what he sees and hears, throws out all his energies, and this is saying much, for "the spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, which searcheth all the inward recesses."—*Ibid*.

[14562] It is liberty of mind which, more than anything else, enables the preacher to be natural, and therefore to give the right tone. Were he completely at home, the greatest hindrance to a true and natural eloquence would be removed. But it is this that is most wanting, both in those who extemporize (which can easily be understood) and in those who repeat a discourse they have committed to memory. When they see themselves in presence of a congregation they get frightened; they fear to displease; or they have higher feelings—they fear not to make impression on those who listen to them; or, again, they experience a vague embarrassment which they cannot easily account for. Now it is the people that intimidate them; now it is a few of the hearers; yea, perhaps, a single hearer more enlightened, more difficult to satisfy, or even of a higher rank than others: poor human heart! As soon as that unfortunate timidity enters the soul, all is lost. The eye of the mind gets obscured, the thoughts become confused, the feelings grow blunt; the voice itself falters, a too short breathing fatigues the lungs and foretells a coming hoarseness. If the speaker extemporizes, he runs the risk of coming to a dead stand, or else by a kind of calculation which he makes almost unconsciously, he will try to conceal the pooriness of the matter under the *éclat* of the manner, and will throw out commonplace ideas, badly developed, and scarcely just, in a solemn voice and declamatory tone, which will leave his hearers as cold as himself, and which, once adopted, or rather submitted to, will hold the speaker captive till the end of his discourse.—*Ibid*.

[14563] The mere reciter, although he may be a brilliant rhetorician, can never be a true orator. He cannot sway a multitude as from a throne, by a potent and present inspiration, and with the true electric sympathy which should perfectly identify the speaker and his audience—he can never move and animate at will those who are hanging on his lips, whose temper he sees and measures, whose individuality he vanquishes, and binds in one passion and purpose, whose prejudices he conciliates and overpowers, whose enthusiasm he first kindles, and then, mounting upon it as a chariot of fire, is rapt by it into regions higher than, by his own individual passion and enthusiasm, he could ever have reached, guiding his flight the while under the highest energy of his blended and impassioned faculties, as carried far out of self-consciousness

and yet completely self-possessed. This is true oratory, this is genuine power of speaking. The highest results of this kind should be gained under the influence of the highest themes and the Divine Spirit.—*London Quarterly Review.*

[14564] Why are we natural everywhere but in the pulpit? No man expresses warm and animated feelings anywhere else, with his mouth alone, but with his whole body; he articulates with every limb, and talks from head to foot with a thousand voices. Why this holoplexia on sacred occasions alone? Why call in the aid of paralysis to piety? Is it a rule of oratory to balance the style against the subject, and to handle the most sublime truths in the dullest language and driest manner? Is sin to be taken from men, as Eve was from Adam, by casting them into a deep slumber? Or from what possible perversion of common sense are we all to look like field preachers in Zembla, holy lumps of ice numbed into quiescence and stagnation, and mumbling? There is, I grant, something discouraging at present to a man of sense in the sarcastic phrase of "popular preacher"; but I am not entirely without hope that the time may come when energy in the pulpit may be no longer considered as a mark of superficial understanding; when animation and affectation will be separated; when churches will cease (as Swift says) to be public dormitories; and sleep be no longer looked upon as the most convenient vehicle of good sense.—*Sydney Smith.*

(3) *Loyalty to God and truth.*

a. God must be the great overshadowing object of each preacher's message. All preaching that violates this precept is vicious.

[14565] Christ is God. In preaching Christ, we simply preach God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses. Whether we set forth the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost, either one of the Three, or the Three in One, we directly and immediately hold forth God, and none else. If, then, the foremost object to be set forth in preaching is the Most High, in His being, infinitude, and perfection; in His works of creation, providence, and grace; in His relations towards us as our Maker, Preserver, Benefactor, our Sovereign, Saviour, and Judge; then that preaching is neither Biblical, Christian, nor even religious, which is not so impregnated with this Divine element, that God is not only its central, but pervading object; over all, in all, through all, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things, to whom be glory for ever.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

[14566] Christ is *the text*; and all preaching beside Christ is beside the text; therefore keep to your text. Secondly—Christ is the *very foundation and subject-matter* of preaching; and all preaching without Christ is building castles in the air. Thirdly—Christ is *the life and soul* of preaching; and all preaching without Him is like a body without life and spirit. Fourthly—

Christ is the great *end* of preaching; preaching is to manifest His glory; and when Christ is not preached, the great end is lost.—*Dr. South.*

[14567] Strong preachers have ever been Bible preachers. The old Reformers drew their weapons from the heavenly armoury. The sermons of Bunyan, and Baxter, and Flavel, and men of their stamp, were full of God—instinct with living doctrines. Their very garb was after the Scripture pattern. Whitefield, as a custom, read the Bible with Henry's Commentary, day by day, on his knees, praying over every sentence, line, and word. Edwards and Davies were mighty in the Scriptures. Of Chalmers, it has been said, that his sermons "held the Bible in solution." Preachers who saturate their sermons with the word of God never wear out. The manna which they bring is pure, and sweet, and freshly gathered. It never cloy. God's word is deep, and he who studies it will ever have something new. He will never be dull, for the words of the Bible are strong, living words, and its images and descriptions are very flowers of elegance. Apt citations clench the passages of the preacher's discourse, and give sanction, dignity, positiveness, authority to it. And they shed light into his subject, like windows in houses.—*Dr. Fish.*

[14568] We recall some of the fathers in the ministry—men of one book—the scriptural element of whose sermons (faulty in some respects) made them very gardens of spices. The people loved to hear them preach, because their discourses had the smell of the myrrh and the cassia in them.—*Ibid.*

[14569] Settle in your mind that no sermon is worth much in which the Lord is not the principal speaker. There may be poetry, refinement, historic truth, moral truth, pathos, and all the charms of rhetoric; but all will be lost, for the purposes of preaching, if the word of the Lord is not the staple of the discourse.—*J. Hall.*

[14570] Through the very embarrassing wealth at his disposal the modern preacher is in danger of being beguiled too far from his appointed work. Divergence, both in the matter and form of pulpit addresses, may be well allowed; amplitude of range over cognate or tributary provinces of thought is even expected from the accomplished preacher of these days; the variety of minds to be won, and the liberty conceded to him who by all means would win them, were never greater than now: yet to all this there are limits, prescribed by the very conception of the gospel, which it is fatal to overpass. Whenever the preacher forgets the radical idea of his office, as determined by the nature of his message, so far as to subordinate God's exact design in preaching to anything else, instead of subordinating everything to that, the preacher is in strict use of words a preacher no longer.—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

[14571—14576]

6. The preacher must be the mouthpiece not of his congregation, but of the Divine oracles.

[14571] When some one in these days affirmed that the task of the preacher is to declare the consciousness of fellowship, to be "the mouthpiece of the congregation," he certainly stated an important truth; but he also uttered a serious error if he intended to make this the only or the highest object. For the consciousness of the Church, as it may be found at this time or at that, is in many respects very undefined and variable, composed both of spiritual and worldly elements. A church consciousness which does not seek by means of preaching to submit itself to the testing of God's word, and by its fulness to be edified, will very soon find itself reduced to an indistinct, powerless spiritualism, which knows no difference between the sayings of men and the saving doctrine of Christ. And the preacher who makes himself only "the mouth of the congregation," and who does not prepare himself, if need be alone—fortifying himself with Holy Scripture and the œcumenical testimony—to speak against the erring consciousness of the congregation, infected as it is with the spirit of the day, will soon become the servant of the Church in such a sense, that he can no longer be the Lord's servant.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[14572] One great want of the times is a commanding ministry—a ministry of a piety at once sober and earnest, and of mightiest moral power. Give us these men, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," who will proclaim old truths with new energy, not lumbering them with massive drapery nor hiding them beneath piles of rubbish. Give us these men! men of sound speech, who will preach the truth as it is in Jesus, not with faltering tongue and averted eye, as if the mind blushed at its own credulity—not distilling into it an essence so subtle and so speedily decomposed that a chemical analysis alone can detect the faint odour which tells it has been there—but who will preach it apostlewise, that is, "first of all," at once a principle shined in the heart and a motive mighty in the life—the source of all morals, and the inspiration of all charity—the sanctifier of every relationship, and the sweetener of every toil. Give us these men! men of zeal untiring—whose hearts of constancy quail not although dull men sneer, and proud men scorn, and timid men blush, and cautious men deprecate, and wicked men revile.—*Wm. M. Proushon.*

[14573] The attempt to edify the Church without doctrinal instruction is like the attempt to build a house without foundation or framework. Let any in derision call the doctrines "bones," if they will. What sort of a body would that be which was flesh and blood, without bones? If any present them in skeleton nakedness, divested of their vital relations to life and experience, this is the fault of those who do it, not of true and proper doctrinal preaching, which on one of its sides is practical and experimental. In fact, the two should never be torn

asunder, any more than the flesh and bones. They should ever blend with and vitally interpenetrate each other, and be pervaded by the unction of the Holy One. No sane man will contend for mere dogmatic abstractions in the pulpit. Much less should it be a theatre for philosophic or metaphysical disquisitions. But it should be a theatre for unfolding, illustrating, enforcing Divine truth proved by the testimony of Him for whom it is impossible to lie, to be apprehended by the intellect, and vouched for by the conscience, of man.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

#### (4) Faith.

[14574] The roots of successful preaching must be found in our own state of mind. To this state of mind belongs, for one thing, faith in preaching itself—that is to say, a lively apprehension of the fitness and hopefulness of assailing the human mind, in its actual relations to God, with preaching, as an agency chosen by Divine wisdom, and ordained with Divine promises, to do work which nothing else can do. There are doctors who have no faith in treatment; there are preachers who have no faith in preaching.—*Principal Rainy.*

[14575] The accent of conviction is made up of a mixture of faith, power, and love combined, forming a characteristic which is at once simple, pious, and grand, redolent of inspiration and sanctity. It is the power, the magic of speech, the sacred fire, or what Mirabeau styles divinity in eloquence. It puts argument to silence, withdraws all attention from the preacher, and fixes it solely on what he says, or rather on what God says through him. It carries everything before it, because it comes from a heart that echoes the voice of God Himself. But take away the accent of conviction from the preacher, and divest his sermon of energetic faith, and what is left in it for his hearers? Mere sounding phrases and nothing more.—*Mullois.*

## 2 As regards the preaching.

### (1) *It should be deducible from common sense.*

[14576] There is one prerequisite to pulpit efficiency. I mean that quality which we call *common sense*. Alas! how many preachers, otherwise admirably equipped, have failed for lack of that? And yet it is difficult to give a definition of it. We may describe it as an intuitive perception of the fitness of things, so that he who is endowed with it will always do that which is appropriate to the circumstances. It is different from caution, or what is generally known as prudence, inasmuch as that is the result of calculation, while common sense is rather an immediate perception. . . . The breach of it may not be precisely an immorality, but it is an indecorum. He who lacks this quality has no right to be a minister, for he turns the most sacred things into a laughing-stock, and makes a burlesque of the office itself. Do not set yourselves to shock the feelings of your hearers by your wanton defiance of all their prepossessions, or, if you will, their prejudices. Become all



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things to all men, that you may by all means save some.—*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*

[14577] The foolishness of preaching, by which God is pleased to save us, is a very different thing from the preaching of foolishness.—*D. Moore.*

(2) *It should be naturally simple.*

[14578] There are some subjects respecting which it is necessary to enter into reasonings of rather an abstract and intricate character; such as might only serve to bewilder nine-tenths of an ordinary popular congregation, were we to tax their intellects with the attempt to follow them; subjects on which it is above all things desirable that we should have our own minds clear and, as far as possible, unembarrassed by questions of doubtful and perplexing casuistry; but respecting which our great object should be rather to present, in a simple form, the result of our investigations, than to detail the process by which we have reached it.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

[14579] If at any time you have found it unavoidable to grope your own way through a labyrinth of dark and intricate passages, forget not that it has been, or ought to have been, that you might ultimately emerge into light; and that there are not a few minds which, were you to attempt to lead them through the same mazes of obscurity and intricacy, it is a thousand to one if you did not leave in the central gloom. If you find it necessary to explore certain mines of subterranean secresy, "paths which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen;" let your aim be, not to induce others to follow you, but to bring out for them what you have been able to find there, the gold and the jewels, the imperishable riches.—*Ibid.*

[14580] The very beauty of the gospel is its simplicity. It is its simplicity that fits it for universality. It is a manifestation of the Divine benevolence, of the love of the Godhead; such as in its grand elements the weakness of the weakest can comprehend with a sufficient amount of clearness to make them feel experimentally its renewing and gladdening power; whilst in some of its bearings it has in it depths of which the line of human, perhaps even of arch-angelic wisdom, is not long enough to take the soundings. But from these depths of the Divine counsel, depths of "the riches, and wisdom, and knowledge of God," the "pearl of great price," has been brought up, and offered by Him to men.—*Ibid.*

[14581] The Saviour gave it as one of the evidences of His Divine commission, that "to the poor the gospel was preached;" and that many a time has it pleased the God of all grace to "hide these things from the wise and prudent, and to reveal them to babes."—*Ibid.*

[14582] Some ministers love to soar aloft, like the eagle, and fly above their people's capacities, endeavouring rather to be admired than under-

stood. They are like some crabbed authors which cannot be read without a comment. Indeed God calls His ministers ambassadors, but they must not be like those outlandish ambassadors that cannot be understood without an interpreter. 'Tis unmercifulness to souls to preach so as not to be understood. Ministers should be stars to give light, not clouds to obscure the truth. St. Paul was learned, yet plain. Clearness and perspicuity is the grace of speech. 'Tis cruelty to souls when we go about to make easy things hard. This many are guilty of in our age, who go into the pulpit only to tie knots, and think it their glory to amuse the people, this savours more of pride than mercifulness.—*T. Watson.*

[14583] Let the preacher think out his subject so thoroughly that his ideas shall lie clear and distinct like crystals in his own mind; and then let him remember that "a straight line is the shortest distance between two points," and speak accordingly. What right has he to use an involved and tortuous manner when declaring the great things of God?—"darkening counsel by words without knowledge?" What right has he to come before plain people in the straight-jacket of professional dignity, and talk of "volition" instead of will, and "intellectual processes" instead of thinking, and "moral obligation" instead of duty, and the like, as if the very use of language were, as Talleyrand suggests, "to conceal one's thoughts"? What right has he to give his hearers the hard stone of metaphysics, when they are dying for the bread of heaven? What right has he to bring forward profound disquisitions and curious speculations, when the command is, "Preach the preaching that I bid thee"? And what right has he to hide that Christ whom he is to make known, amid flowers of rhetoric, as Verelst, in his portrait of James II., virtually hid his majesty, in a profusion of sunflowers and tulips?—*Dr. Fish.*

[14584] When the late young preacher, Erskine Hawes, was dying, he said, "I wish to live to *preach the gospel more simply.*" How many at death's door have felt as he felt?—*Ibid.*

[14585] "I speak the words of soberness," says St. Paul, "and I preach the gospel, not with enticing words of man's wisdom." This was the way of the apostles, discoursing of things sacred. Nothing here of the "fringes of the northern star;" nothing of "the down of angels' wings, or the beautiful locks of cherubim;" no starched similitudes, introduced with a "thus have I seen a cloud rolling in its airy mansion." No; these were sublimities above the rise of the apostolic spirit.—*South.*

(3) *It should be lovingly sympathetic.*

[14586] The heart is the source of all true eloquence.—*Longinus.*

[14587] Persuasion, friend, comes not by toil or art; Hard study never made the matter clearer;

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'Tis the live fountain in the speaker's heart  
Sends forth the streams that melt the ravished  
hearer.

Would you then touch the heart, the only method  
known,

My worthy friend, *is first to have one of your  
own.*—*Goethe.*

[14588] Still thinking I had little time to live,  
My fervent heart to win men's souls did rise ;  
I preached as never sure to preach again,  
And as a dying man to dying men ! . . .  
Though God be free, He works by instruments,  
And wisely fitteth them to His intents.  
A proud unhumbed preacher is unmeet  
To lay proud sinners humbled at Christ's feet ;  
So are the blind to tell men what God saith,  
And faithless men to propagate the faith.  
The dead are unfit men to raise the dead,  
And enemies to give the children's bread,  
And utter strangers to the life to come  
Are not the best conductors to our home.  
They that yet never learned to live and die  
Will scarcely teach it others feelingly.

—*R. Baxter.*

[14589] If thy heart be cold as snow, how  
shall thy words dissolve the ice which congeals  
the life-blood of a sinner's soul ? Have a fire in  
thy bosom that men may come and warm at it  
their cold, bruised hearts.—*M. J.*

(1) *It should be wisely discriminative.*

[14590] With regard to all that is commonly  
understood by the moral and worldly virtues ;  
*i.e.*, virtues which often exist without piety, and  
are commanded by the natural conscience, and  
the code of worldly respectability, as well as by  
the gospel, such as temperance, chastity, honesty,  
veracity, fidelity, kindness, &c., it is needless to  
say that they are of self-evident obligation ;  
that if they may exist without piety, piety can-  
not exist without them ; and that they should  
be enjoined, as they are in the Bible. They  
should be enforced, not merely by natural and  
worldly, but by spiritual and evangelical motives.  
Yet they ought not to fill any large or over-  
shadowing place in preaching. This should be  
mainly occupied with the glorious gospel of the  
blessed God, and its heavenly truths and re-  
quirements ; and with these subordinated, as  
its subordinate though indispensable fruits.—*C.  
Hodge, D.D.*

[14591] Let us learn from God's dealing with  
His children how to deal with ours. Begin  
with the fatherly care, go on to the redeeming  
love, and then, and not till then, seek to im-  
press the holiness and justice, and the terror of  
His avenging law. Much injury has often been  
done to the tender hearts of little children by  
beginning with Sinai, and the terrors of the law  
—by giving them their first ideas of religion in  
the shape of threats of Divine vengeance, if  
they do not obey. With the hardened sinner  
it may be necessary to begin with the terrors of  
the law, in the hope of showing him his need of

salvation from the wrath to come ; but with the  
comparatively innocent children, this course is  
apt to be exceedingly injurious. Let them know  
His fatherly care, His tender sympathy, His re-  
deeming love—let them know these well and  
thoroughly before you alarm them with the  
terrors of His avenging wrath.—*Monro Gibson,  
D.D.*

[14592] Imagine an ambassador charged, at  
some great crisis, with a momentous proposal  
difficult to carry through, yet such as may be-  
come an era in the history of nations. You can  
see him at levees, at assemblies, amid the whirl  
and bustle of court life, full of his plan, watching  
every current that runs, resolute to turn all to  
his purpose, if he can. Some such attitude  
becomes us.—*Principal Rainy.*

(5) *It should be definitely practical.*

[14593] The consciences of men must be  
made to apprehend the reality of sin, and their  
hearts must be filled with dread and with hope  
by the anger and the mercy of the living God.  
The mysterious instinct, suppressed but not  
destroyed, which bears witness to the kinship  
of the human soul to the Father of spirits, must  
be quickened into activity ; and then, without  
any argument of ours, men will recognize in the  
voice of Christ an august sovereignty to which  
they cannot refuse to do homage, and will dis-  
cover for themselves that in dying, the just for  
the unjust, to bring us to God, He has met the  
deepest wants of their spiritual life as well as  
revealed the infinite wealth and tenderness of  
the Divine love.—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

[14594] A minister who does not preach about  
anything but dry doctrines bears the same rela-  
tion to actual life which a doctor would who  
never gave a dose of medicine or a prescription  
for a living patient, but occupied himself in  
Egypt with mummies, prescribing for them,  
though they have been dead three thousand  
years ! A pulpit that is for ever preaching  
upon philosophical inanities, that is for ever  
preaching upon mere abstractions, is not pure,  
is not true, is not orthodox. A pulpit that does  
not make itself felt in the forge, in the shop, in  
the store, behind the banker's counter, on the  
ship, on the wharf, or in the caucus, comes short  
of its duty. Wherever the devil tempts men to  
sin, there the voice of the pulpit must be heard  
teaching them the better way.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[14595] If clergymen in our day would return  
to the simplicity of the gospel, and preach more  
to individuals and less to the crowd, there would  
not be so much complaint of the decline of true  
religion. Many of the ministers of the present  
day take their texts from St. Paul, and preach  
from the newspapers. When they do so, I pre-  
fer to enjoy my own thoughts rather than to  
listen. I want my pastor to come to me in the  
spirit of the gospel, saying, "You are mortal ;  
your probation is brief ; your work must be  
done speedily. You are immortal, too. You  
are hastening to the bar of God ; the Judge

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even now standeth at the door!" When I am thus admonished, I have no disposition either to muse or to sleep.—*D. Webster.*

[14596] The hearers of a sermon ought to leave the church prepared to *do* as well as to *believe*.—*Dean Ramsay.*

[14597] Suppose that, without making any direct and preparatory effort of psychological divination, you resolve to compose and preach one sermon (on any common topic) for the special and, as it were, sole benefit and impression of one member of your flock, presented to your mind just as he sits in his pew. You need not begin by prying into his breast, but take him as represented in his familiar outer man, down to the curl of his whisker and the buttons of his great-coat. You are going, for once, to interest, to enlighten, to get hold of *him*. Plan the sermon as if you were planning how to talk to him on some subject that is delicate and important. Avail yourself of his business and his habits, make avenues to him, come up to him on this side and on that, to persuade him, and interest him, and arouse him. If you do this, what will come of it, when the sermon is preached? As concerns the person himself, to whom you devote so much attention, I promise nothing. I should not be amazed, nor greatly disappointed, if he sat like a statue, or if he slept like a dormouse. But I should think it far from unlikely that a score of *other* people, including some of the unlikeliest subjects, should give proof of quite exceptional interest; nay, I should not wonder if some of such unthought-of persons should give crowning evidence of your complete success, by an action of damages for defamation of character.—*Principal Rainy.*

[14598] The eloquence needed for this age is that of Pericles, which "left stings behind." Most hearers know enough; they want to be made to *feel* and to *do*. The defensive outworks of Christianity are pretty well raised; we now need to advance on the enemy, and "shell" him out from his entrenchments, by shooting fires into the souls of men. A discourse had better be like a hetchel with the tow pulled out, than like a damask cushion for the hearer to lean a sleepy head upon. Better like lightning, darning zig-zag, and piercing, and tearing, and splitting the object it strikes, than like a letter despatched without a direction (to use John Newton's comparison), addressed to nobody, owned by nobody, and if a hundred people were to read it, not one of them would think himself concerned in its contents.—*Dr. Fish.*

[14599] Sermons are wanted now which are made and meant to do execution—sermons which grasp, and make bare, and wield some one mighty idea, holding it up, and turning it around, and repeating it, if need be, as does Demosthenes the one main point in his oration on the crown, until it becomes a palpable thing, and the audience feel its form and pressure—

sermons having the "agonistical," the wrestling element in them, as Aristotle calls it—sermons put together on the principle that "force in writing consists in the maximum of sense with the minimum of words," whose sentences are pounded together until they crack, and where figure, trope, allegory, metaphor, antithesis, interrogation, anecdote—anything that can awaken interest and deepen impression is resorted to—sermons supported and sinewed with the "thus saith the Lord," and then charged with living truth, and aimed directly at the conscience and the heart, singling out each bearer, and saying, "Thou art the man," and "I have a message from God unto thee," and then making pursuit after that man, in clear, rapid, concentrated utterances, and pressing upon him, and narrowing his way, and hemming him in, and smiting him down with terrible volleys, until, quivering and breathless, he crouches "between the law that condemns and the cross that saves."—*Ibid.*

(6) *It should be doctrinally positive.*

[14600] Truth is the soul's daily bread, and even though there be bran in the loaf, it is still and evermore the bread of life. To tell people who are hungry, that bread of fine flour is sure to give dyspepsia, that baker's bread is a mixture of bad flour and alum, and very injurious; that corn bread is too heavy for the stomach, that barley and rye are deficient in nutritive qualities, and that oat cakes are only fit for horses, is to distract attention while the body starves for food. The negative preaching of our day destroys confidence in the great nutritive faiths on which generations of Christians have lived and wrought, and puts nothing in their place. It is not what men doubt, but what they believe with mind and might—the beliefs they live upon, the faiths they assimilate and reproduce in conduct and character—that save them from sin, and make them strong to do and endure.—*A. P. Peabody.*

[14601] The sun does not say that he will not bring summer upon the earth until all weeds are pulled up; he brings in summer, notwithstanding the weeds. Our first work is not argument against error, but the preaching of affirmative doctrine.—*J. Parker, D.D.*

[14602] We are under the most solemn obligation to receive ourselves, and to make known to others, whatever God has revealed concerning the condition and destiny of our race. To refuse to consider the terrible penalties which menace those who have not received the remission of sins, will lessen the urgency of our solicitude for their eternal redemption; and if we fail to warn them that while they persist in their impenitence and unbelief they are exposed to "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish," we cannot clear ourselves of responsibility for their eternal perdition.—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

[14603] It is of no avail to plead that to tell men they have provoked the Divine hostility



and the Divine wrath, is likely to repel them from Christ, rather than to attract them to Him. We are bound to tell them the real facts—concealing nothing, alleviating nothing. Christ Himself is responsible for the revelation He has made to our race. To improve upon it, to suppress what we think is likely to provoke resentment; to insist incessantly on what we think is likely to conciliate, is no part of our duty. It is for us to “use great plainness of speech,” “not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully.”—*Ibid.*

(7) *It should be zealously fervent.*

[14604] The Spirit of the age, enthusiastic in almost everything else, is comparatively cold in religion. Hence sermons, even those which are intended to do good, are manufactured to order. At all events, they are not fabricated “in fire.” They do not issue, glowing and sparkling, from the living furnace within. They not only smell of the lamp, but they bear obvious marks of the hammer and the chisel. Their power is mechanical and earthly, not vital and Divine. Moreover, a large portion of them are formed of the most commonplace materials, collected here and there from old piles of mental rubbish. Orthodox enough, and perhaps Scriptural; but, like the bones seen by Ezekiel in the “Valley of Vision,” they are “very dry.” . . . A classic finish is the rage of the times; but the grand deficiency is vital warmth; in other words, reality, power, and inspiration.—*Turnbull.*

[14605] The moonbeams are pretty, but they are cold and powerless. What we need is enthusiasm in the highest sense; that is, “God in us,” awakening in the soul higher conceptions, purer instincts, and loftier aspirations. Perhaps we need learning and polish; but we need godliness and fervour infinitely more. Our lips must be touched with “a live coal from off the altar.” We speak well only when God speaks through us.—*Ibid.*

[14606] It is reported of a clergyman that he once heard a long sermon addressed to a large congregation, and, when asked his opinion of the sermon, answered: “It was good, all orthodox; but one of the strongest evidences of the Divine origin of the gospel to me is that it stands, and has stood, through ages of such dull and lifeless preaching.”—*Homiletic Magazine.*

[14607] I would have every minister of the gospel address his audience with the zeal of a father, with the generous energy of a father, and with the exuberant affection of a mother.—*Fenelon.*

[14608] Experience is continually proving that, with here and there an excepted place, there are sure to be hearers where there are zealous preachers. Some salutary coercion of a superior power compels them, in a manner which themselves cannot account for, to go again and again within reach of the voice of such preachers.—*Foster.*

(8) *It should be decidedly adaptable.*

a. To the position and needs of the hearers.

[14609] Some of the best informed preachers know so much more than their hearers, that they forget how far they must come down to be on a level with the understanding of their hearers. It is important to have higher ground than the person you would uplift; but because he is below you, you must stoop sufficiently to allow him to get hold of your hand. If he is down a well, and you are on the level ground, you can never reach him by standing on tiptoe and raising your arms. You must get down on your knees, and lower your hands to the level of his, before you can even start him toward your higher plane.—*Anon.*

[14610] We hold that a physician, who takes care of the body, and who remotely takes care of the mind, should understand every organ of the human constitution, both in its healthy and in its morbid state. We hold, not only that he is to understand every part of the body of man, but that he is to understand the nature of the world on which man lives, the vegetables that grow upon it, the minerals that are in it, everything it contains which concerns mankind. Now, if so much is expected of a man who is a physician of the body, how much more ought to be expected of a man who is a physician of the soul!—*H. W. Beecher.*

[14611] A divine ought to calculate his sermon as an astrologer does his almanac—to the meridian of the place and people where he lives.—*T. Hughes.*

b. To the requirements of the age.

[14612] What are we to understand as preaching with reference to the requirements of the age? I answer: it means, first of all, so to divide the word of truth as the *οἰκοδομή*, the edification of our contemporaries, demands of us; it means to dispose the whole form of the sermon in such a manner as the whole condition and physiognomy of the present, in which each preacher stands, gives reasonable ground to suppose will be the most efficacious and successful; it means to apply to our own congregations what the apostles said to theirs, to combat all the evil tendencies and sins of the age while we forward all the tendencies to good; in this sense there is much truth in the assertion of a celebrated man, that *the Shemitic must be translated into the Aphetic*. Each age has thus had its own peculiar and often strongly marked mode of preaching.—*P. Rüling of Bautzen.*

(9) *It should be unaffectedly real.*

[14613] A good preacher is one who preaches both with experience and unction, who takes more pains to fit himself by general than by special preparation, who speaks right out from the heart to the heart, and who uses such plainness of speech that, while offending none by anything approaching coarseness, at the same time he is understood by those who have no

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other wit than mother wit, and no other tongue than mother tongue.—*Heard*.

[14614] We wish that there could be compiled a book which should register the sayings, the words, which, falling from the lips of preachers in different ages, have penetrated that thick coating of indifference and prejudice which lies naturally on every man's heart, and reached the soil in which vegetation is possible. The volume would be a volume, we believe, of little fragments: it would be made up of simple sentiments and brief statements: in the majority of instances a few syllables would constitute the "grain of mustard seed," to which Christ Himself likened His religion at the outset.—*H. Melvill, B.D.*

[14615] We are only asserting what we reckon attested by the whole tenor of ministerial experience, when we say, that sermons which God honours to the conversion of hearers, are generally effective in some solitary paragraph; and that the results which they produce may fairly be traced, not to the lengthened oration, as a compact and well-adjusted engine, but to one of its assertions, or its remonstrances, which possibly, had you subjected the discourse to the judgment of a critic, would have been left out as injurious, or at least not conducive, to the general effect.—*Ibid.*

[14616] In ascending the lofty peaks of the Jungfrau and Monte Rosa, the guides not unfrequently resort to the innocent artifice of endeavouring to interest the traveller in the beauty of the flowers in order to distract his attention from the fearful abysses which the giddy path overhangs. What the Alpine guides thus innocently do, we preachers are often tempted to do not so innocently. We are prone so to occupy our hearers with the graces of composition and the flowers of rhetoric that they are in danger of altogether forgetting that there is a dread abyss beside them, and that there is but a step between them and death.—*J. Halsey.*

#### XI. ITS CRITERION OF SUCCESS.

[14617] What is ministerial success? Crowded churches, full aisles, attentive congregations, the approval of the religious world, much impression produced? Elijah thought so; and when he discovered his mistake, and found out that the Carmel applause subsided into hideous stillness, his heart well-nigh broke with disappointment. Ministerial success lies in altered lives, and obedient, humble hearts, unseen worth recognized in the judgment-day.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

[14618] That is not the best sermon that makes the hearers go away talking to one another, and praising the speaker; but that which makes them go away thoughtful and serious, and hastening to be alone.—*Bp. Burnet.*

#### XII. ITS CONTROVERSIAL ASPECT.

Controversy in the pulpit should be avoided, except on rare and grave occasions.

[14619] Patriotic and political sermons are rather to be avoided, and yet in certain grave circumstances we may be obliged to touch upon such subjects in the pulpit. . . . We must beware, lest we inflame on this hearth the passions of the natural man. How shall we now speak of politics without taking a side? We must remark, also, the utilitarianism which for the most part is concealed in these subjects. It is better for the preacher, as it is for the navigator, to keep himself in the high sea; it is in the neighbourhood of coasts that shipwrecks are most frequent.—*Vine's Homiletics.*

[14620] Surely the church is a place where one day's truce ought to be allowed to the dissensions and animosities of mankind.—*Burke.*

[14621] Though we may believe that many hearts were cheered and many doubts hushed by the Christian apologies, yet the revival of religion which marked the eighteenth century was due to the spiritual yearnings created by the ministrations of men, often rude and unlettered, who told the wondrous story of Christ crucified; heart speaking to heart, with intuitions kindled from on high. The sinful began to feel that God was not afar off, reposing in the solitude of His own blessedness, and abandoning mankind to the government of conscience and to the operation of general laws, but nigh at hand, with a heart of Fatherly love to pity, and an ear of mercy to listen. The narrative of Christ, the Son of God, coming down to seek, and to save that which was lost, awoke an echo in the heart which neutralized the doubts infused by the deist. And it is a comfort to every Christian labourer to know that if he cannot wrangle out a controversy with the doubter, he can speak to the doubter's heart.—*Rev. A. S. Farrar, D.D.*

#### XIII. DIGNITY OF THE PREACHER'S OFFICE.

Of all human callings there is none nobler than that of the preacher of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[14622] Other educators of the human race have undoubtedly magnificent work to do. The artist's province is to train the eye and imagination to the discovery and appreciation of the beautiful in action, in art, and in nature. The scholar's is to lay before our minds the intellectual workings of earnest men, who, being dead, yet speak. The naturalist's is to unravel before our wondering admiration the marvellous volume of the material universe. Each finds his highest aim in the unfolding of the ways of God to the soul of man, and thus placing that soul nearer to its God than it was before. The preacher, however, while appreciating all these things most highly, knows how insignificant

they are when compared with the truths he has to enforce on our consciences and our hopes. Their labours touch but the outwork of the soul, but his penetrate to the citadel; theirs need not reach beyond the actions of the life, but his must influence the very remotest springs of action; the secret shrine of motive is consequently the place he is to change from a sepulchre, where lie dead men's bones, into a palace, where the Spirit of Truth may find a home.—*J. McCann, D.D.*

#### XIV. THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL AND THE LAW.

**Must be duly and simultaneously united.**

[14623] There can be no question that the preaching of the law, in its Scriptural character and connection, must form a constituent part of the ministry of the gospel. Some, indeed, upon a contracted and inaccurate view, identify the preaching of the law with legal preaching. Others preach the law independently of the gospel. But, as there is a legal mode of preaching the gospel, so there is an evangelical mode of preaching the law.—*Bridges.*

[14624] As thunder without rain did more harm than good, so ministers that preach the terrors of the law, but do not, at the same time, drop in the dew of gospel instruction and consolation, are not "wise master-builders"; for they pull down, but build nothing up again.—*Luther.*

[14625] As the law may be preached too much, when it is preached without the principal, which is the gospel; so the gospel, and the mercy therein, may be preached too much (or rather, indeed, too little), because it is with less success (if we may call it preaching, and not rather perverting of the gospel) when it is preached without the appendant, which is the law.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

[14626] Any work which treats even of our natural relations to God in a serious and earnest spirit, and seeks to place clearly before the minds of worldly men the solemn duties and responsibilities which these relations involve, may be expected to awaken, in the first instance, their latent aversion; and this aversion, unless it be subdued by the "glad tidings" of a full and free salvation, will prompt them either to dismiss the subject from their thoughts, or to cherish a habit of sceptical speculation, such as always amounts to practical, and may very easily pass into dogmatic, atheism.—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

#### XV. THE DUTY OF HEARERS.

**Not daintily to comment upon the message delivered as intellectual critics, but humbly to apply the truth conveyed as erring sinners.**

[14627] There are numbers who constantly come up to God's house with the very tempers

and feelings which you would carry to a lecture room, with all that excited intellect and all that critical spirit which fit you for nothing but the sitting in judgment upon what shall be delivered, as upon a process of argument or a specimen of elocution. There is practically no recognition of the commission which is borne by the man who addresses you, no influential persuasion of his being an appointed messenger, through whom you may hope that God will graciously infuse light into the understanding, and warmth into the heart; but, on the contrary, he is thought to stand before you with no higher claim on your attention than what he can make good by his own mental powers, and with no greater likelihood of speaking to your profit than is furnished by his known skill as an expositor of truth. And upon this account mainly it is, as we have been long painfully convinced, that there are such insufficient results from the services of God's house, that sabbath after sabbath passes away and scarce leaves a token that good has been wrought.—*H. Melvill, B.D.*

[14628] You are not in the moral attitude which is presupposed in the appointment of the preacher. You are in the attitude of critics, you are in the attitude of a jury having to pronounce a verdict after hearing certain statements. But the preacher is not before you as a debater, the preacher is not before you as a pleader; and consequently your attitude is just the reverse of that which ought to be assumed: the preacher is before you as an ambassador, and therefore ought you to be in the attitude of listeners to an overture from the God whom you have offended, of expectants of a communication from Him in whose name the preacher addresses you.—*Ibid.*

[14629] There are two ways of regarding a sermon, either as a human composition, or a Divine message. If we look upon it entirely as the first, and require our clergymen to finish it with their utmost care and learning for our better delight, whether of ear or intellect, we shall necessarily be led to expect much formality and stateliness in its delivery, and to think that all is not well if the pulpit have not a golden fringe round it, and a goodly cushion in front of it, and if the sermon be not fairly written in a black brook, to be smoothed upon the cushion in a majestic manner before beginning; all this we shall duly come to expect; but we shall at the same time consider the treatise thus prepared as something to which it is our duty to listen, without restlessness, for half an hour or three-quarters, but which, when that duty has been decorously performed, we may dismiss from our minds in happy confidence of being provided with another when next it shall be necessary. But if once we begin to regard the preacher, whatever his faults, as a man sent with a message to us which it is a matter of life or death whether we hear or refuse; if we look upon him as set in charge over many spirits in danger of ruin, and having a fowed to him but an hour or two in the seven days to speak to them; if we



make some endeavour to conceive how precious these hours ought to be to him; a small vantage on the side of God after His flock have been exposed for six days together to the full weight of the world's temptation, and he has been forced to watch the thorn and the thistle springing in their hearts, and to see what wheat had been scattered there, snatched from the wayside by this wild bird and the other, and at last, when breathless and weary with the week's labour, they give him this interval of imperfect and languid hearing, he has but thirty minutes to get at the separate hearts of a thousand men, to convince them of all their weaknesses, to shame them for all their sins, to warn them of all their dangers, to try by this way and that to stir the hard fastenings of those doors where the Master Himself has stood and knocked, and yet none opened, and to call at the openings of those dark streets where Wisdom hath stretched forth her hands and no one regarded—thirty minutes to raise the dead in—let us but once understand and feel this, and we shall look with changed eyes upon that frippery of gay furniture about the place from which the message of judgment must be delivered, which either breathes upon dry bones that they may live, or, if ineffectual, remains recorded in condemnation, perhaps against the utterer and listener alike, but assuredly against one of them. We shall not so easily bear with the silk and gold upon the seat of judgment, nor with ornament of oratory in the mouth of the messenger; we should wish that his words may be simple, even when they are sweetest, and the place from which he speaks like a marble rock in the desert, about which the people have gathered in their thirst.—*Ruskin*.

[14630] Be sure that the word is for you; that, if you feel it not, it is because sin has not only chained but blinded you; and pray God to search your heart for you, that, revealing to you your own need, He may draw you to seek His power. And let those lessons of self-knowledge which the ministry of the Word is employed to teach us be treasured up for future use; or rather, carried at once into daily practice, applied to the correction of that which has been amiss in us, and the attainment of that which we have hitherto lacked.—*Dean Vaughan*.

#### XVI. SUPREMACY AND SUFFICIENCY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

[14631] There ought to be nothing at all to be delivered concerning the Divine and holy mysteries of faith without the Holy Scriptures; nor ought we to be moved at all with probabilities and prepared orations or compositions of speech. Neither do thou believe me that say these things, unless thou takest the demonstrations of the things which are said out of the Holy Scriptures.—*St. Cyril*.

[14632] The holy and divinely inspired Scriptures are of themselves sufficient for the discovery of the truth.—*St. Athanasius*.

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[14633] The Bible instructs men in all they need to know. It proclaims the character of that Infinite Being with whom men have to do; it informs us how this world came into existence, and how and for what end it is governed; it reveals whatever is necessary for the glory of the Creator and the happiness of the creature, and discloses the perfect harmony between the honour of the Great Supreme and the best good of His subjects.—*Dr. Gardiner*.

[14634] Holy Scripture discovers the sinfulness and condemnation of men, and the method of their recovery; it reveals promises that are worthy of God, and threatenings that are required by the character and condition of men; it proclaims pardon, peace, and eternal life to the holy; and disaster, ruin, and death to the unholy; it reveals the object and end of whatever appears unseemly and untoward in creation and providence; and proclaims the design which the mighty Governor of the world aims at in the whole series of events and revolutions which have taken place from the beginning, or will take place to the end of time; and it brings to our view the close of this earthly system, the day of final account, and the new earth and new heavens that shall never pass away. On all these topics, so infinitely interesting to men, its instructions are clear, full, certain, authoritative.—*Ibid*.

#### XVII. INTERPRETATIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

##### 1 As regards literal sense.

[14635] In all the interpretations of Scripture, the literal sense is to be presumed and chosen, unless there be evident cause to the contrary. The reasons are plain, because the literal sense is natural, and it is first, and it is most agreeable to some things, in their whole kind. The literal sense is agreeable to laws, to the publication of commands, to the revelation of the Divine will, to the concerns of the vulgar, to the foundations of faith, and to all the notice of things, in which the idiot is as much concerned as the greatest clerks. From which proposition these three corollaries will properly follow: (1) that God hath plainly and literally described all His will, both in belief and practice, in which our essential duty, the duty of all men, is concerned; (2) that in plain expressions we are to look for our duty, and not in the more secret places and darker corners of the Scripture; (3) that you may regularly, certainly, and easily do your duty to the people, if you read and literally expound the plain sayings and easily expressed commandments and promises and threatenings of the gospel, and the Psalms, and the prophets.—*Bp. Jeremy Taylor*.

##### 2 As regards metaphor.

[14636] Where the Scripture useth metaphors which were very familiar in those languages in which the Scripture was writ, and well understood by those who spoke that language, but are

very obscure and uncouth to us, and not at all used in our language, as most of the Scripture metaphors are, the proper work of a minister is not to insist in such cases upon Scripture metaphors, to darken his discourse by them, but to explain them and make them intelligible, to translate them into English, and instead of them to use such phrases as people are more familiarly acquainted with, and are used in our own language. For a man may be a barbarian that speaks to people in unknown phrases and metaphors, as well as he that speaks in an unknown tongue; and the very same reason that obligeth us to put the Scripture into a known language doth oblige men to explain the doctrines contained in it by such phrases and metaphors as are known and used in that language.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

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### XVIII. PREACHING, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

[14637] When we go back across the centuries and set our modern pulpit alongside the recorded preaching of apostolic men, we are sensible of a pretty wide divergence. Theirs was simple, direct, historic; built itself up on a few facts which clung around a central Person. Ours is elaborate, discursive, theoretical, runs in well-worn grooves, and speaks as though it had grown away from the facts out of which it sprang. To some extent, of course, a difference is not only natural, but proper. For the apostles were missionary preachers, addressing men to whom everything was new, with no such heritage of classic thought and phrase as now enriches the Church. We who minister among a people moulded in its very growth by the truths which we preach, must traverse an ampler field, may permit ourselves more detail, and cannot decline to use what the Christian past has brought to illustrate or confirm the old message.—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

[14638] In accessory helps the pulpit grows yearly richer, for the knowledge, experience, and reflection of all civilized men become handmaids to the great gospel which is coming to be more and more acknowledged by the wisest as the regal truth among truths.—*Ibid.*

### XIX. GREAT FRENCH PREACHERS.

[14639] To those who have a facility in the language, we commend the careful study of the French pulpit; for to speak of preaching, and not to name the time of Louis XIV., would be like discussing of sculpture without allusion to the age of Pericles.—*Dr. Alexander.*

[14640] Considered as a product of literary art, the sermon never attained such completeness, beauty, and honour, as in the reign of Louis XIV. Viewed in relation to letters, logic, and eloquence,

as a structure of genius and taste, in the hands of its great orators, it had a rhetorical perfection as distinctly marked as the Greek drama. We are constrained to look upon it in much the same light. The plays of Corneille and the victories of Turenne were not more powerful in penetrating the public mind than the oratory of Notre Dame. Rank and fashion, including royalty itself, thronged the church, as if it were a theatre, wondering and weeping. Madame de Sevigné, the best painter of her age, speaks of a *belle passion*, as the Good Friday sermon was called, just as she speaks of the Cid. The greatest scholars and critics of the Augustan era of France saw their idea of faultless composition realized in the pulpit. The culmination of the art was rapid, and the decline soon followed.—*Ibid.*

[14641] No one will claim more than a few names for the catalogue of masterly French preachers: Bourdaloue, Bossuet, Fenelon, Massillon, Fléchier. Many who had a temporary vogue in their day have been forgotten; but these sustain the ordeal of time.—*Ibid.*

[14642] To Bourdaloue is unhesitatingly given the honour of having raised the French pulpit at once to its greatest height. We may see in La Bruyère how degenerate preaching had become before his day. It was florid, quaint, affected, perplexed with divisions, and overlaid with impertinent learning. He restored it to reason and to nature. No misapprehension can be greater than that which imagines Bourdaloue to have been a man of show, a gaudy rhetorician, or a declaimer. He was, of course, a strenuous Papist, he was even a Jesuit; but assuming his Church to be right, there never was a more unanswerable reasoner in her behalf. It is reasoning, above all things else, which is his characteristic. Seldom does he utter even a few sentences without a connected argument. The amount of matter in his discourses, which are sometimes very long, is truly wonderful. His power of condensation, his exactness of method, his singular clearness, and his animated force, enable him to throw an elaborate argument into a single head. The glory of his art is his magical ability to clothe the subtlest reasoning, in diction so beautiful, as to captivate even the unthinking. In our view, his sermons are a study for the young logician. Even when he is defending the extremest errors of Rome, as in his discourse on the saving merit of alms, we feel that we are in the hands of a terrible antagonist. Amidst passages of incomparable fire he seems constrained to indulge his propensity for laying a train of proofs. Thus in his passion-sermon, on the power of the cross, he inserts in the first and greatest part, a series of admirable arguments for the truth of Christianity.—*Ibid.*

[14643] In some points which concern the outward form of the discourse, Bourdaloue left much to be reformed by his great successors.

His divisions are bold and numerous, and are stated not only with openness, but with a repetition which we have seen nowhere else. So far from hiding the articulations of his work, he is anxious that they should be observed and never forgotten; but he so varies the formulæ of partition, and so beautifies the statement of transitions, by ingenious turns, that the mind is gratified by the exquisiteness of the expression. It had been the fashion to quote the Fathers very largely. Bourdaloue retains this practice. He even seems to wish that his whole performance should rest on citations; and some of them look like centos from Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory. But his management of this is graceful and masterly. And it is entertaining to observe with how rich and eloquent an amplification he will paraphrase and apply one of these little Latin sentences, often bringing it in again and again to close some striking period, and making it ring on the ear with happy vehemence at the climax of a paragraph.—*Ibid.*

[14644] Upon the sufferings of Christ, the love of God, the vanity of the world, and the delights of heavenly contemplation, the greatest of French preachers speaks with a solemnity and an unction which explain to us the admiration felt for him by Boileau and other Jansenists. The manner in which Bourdaloue pronounced his discourses must have had a power of incantation to which even their greatness as compositions gives us no key. It was his remarkable custom to deliver his sermons with his eyes closed; and he is so represented in his portrait. On coming from the provinces, to preach in the Jesuit Chapel in Paris, he was at once followed by crowds of the highest distinction; and his popularity increased to the very close. For thirty-four years he was equally admired by the court, by men of letters, and by the people. To the Christian visitor in Paris, there is something solemn in the church of St. Paul and St. Louis, to approach the tablet with the simple inscription, "Hic Jacet Bourdaloue."—*Ibid.*

## XX. HOMILETICAL RULES.

[14645] Let me give three rules for the composition of a sermon:—First, go to the bottom of the subject, and think of all that should be said upon it; secondly, do not torture the subject by saying all that *can* be said; thirdly, do not crowd your thoughts too thick. If you pour water too fast into the funnel, it will run over.—*Dr. Mason.*

[14646] Three things are necessary to make our preaching effectual: First, we must not be tired of holding up to view the person of the Redeemer—we must depict again and again His person in all its loveliness, in its moral greatness, in its Divine humanity. Secondly, we must endeavour, with fine psychological tact, to lead our hearers into the most secret recess of their own hearts, and disclose to them what lies hidden

there, or we must seek to employ the two-edged sword of the word that discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, so that it may pierce both joints and marrow: that thus, in some one way or other, by methods gentle or severe, we may awaken the *pium desiderium* for a Redeemer and Mediator: then will our preaching of the blood and righteousness of Christ be better received and better understood. Thirdly, we must cause our hearers to feel that they are addressed by one who has experienced the godly sorrow that worketh repentance, by one who has repented and been forgiven for Christ's sake; we must bring to bear on them the influence of our individual selves, so that they may say, He believes, and therefore does he speak; he has himself experienced all this, therefore he *may* speak of it.—*P. Rüling of Bautzen.*

[14647] Take your text; read it carefully in the original language; trace the various meanings which may be attached to its principal words in other parts of the New Testament: having satisfied yourself as to the grammar and meaning of the passage, commit your decision to writing, and then take the opinion of two or three of the most critical expositors, and see how far your judgment accords with theirs: having secured a firm standing-place, you may write in regular order the principal thoughts which the passage suggests to your mind, and this memorandum will be the skeleton of your discourse: now proceed to elaboration, writing upon wide lines, so as to leave room for erasure and interlining: having completed a full draft of all your divisions, begin at the beginning, and strike out all the long words and all the superfluous expressions; let them go without murmuring. If tempted to tell your hearers that Jonah spent a portion of his life under the care of a "submarine custodian," do not hesitate to say plainly that it was only a whale; if you should so far forget yourself as to write the word "pandemonium," erase it, and write the monosyllable over its ruins; and if in a moment of delirium you should put down "my beloved, come with me on the pinions of imagination," pause, and consider soberly whether you had not on the whole better remain where you are. This process being completed, greatly to the disfigurement of your manuscript, re-write the discourse with the most watchful care, determined that everybody who hears you shall not be left in doubt of your meaning: write as if every line might save a life; and when you have made an end of writing, put the manuscript away, and go to your public work with the assurance that all faithful loving service is accepted of the Father, and will be crowned with His effectual blessing.—*Dr. Parker.*

[14648] (1) Resolve to be brief, rather than too long. (2) Be pointed: never preach all round your text without hitting it. (3) State your proposition plainly, but do not stop long to particularize. (4) Avoid long introductions; but plunge into your sermon like a swimmer



into cold water. (5) Condense ; make sure that you have an idea, and then speak it right out in the plainest, shortest possible terms. (6) Avoid high-flown language : quote no Hebrew or Greek ; aim to be simply a preacher. (7) Be honest enough to own that you do avail yourself of help from any source. But in using helps be sure you never make stilts of them, when your own legs are far better. (8) Stop when you have done.—*Revival Advocate*.

## 10

## OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY.

## I. ORIGIN OF THE FIRST SABBATH.

"On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made. . . . And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it ; because that in it He had rested from all His work" (Gen. ii. 2, 3).

[14649] Until the close of the sixth day, everything in the forming world was in commotion. Obedient to the Creator's will, the various portions were seeking their affinities, and the numerous departments of this wondrous sphere were hastening to a completion. The atmosphere was throwing its drapery around the globe, to afford a beautiful medium for the sunlight, which was falling upon it in richest splendour. The waters, hitherto diffused, were gathering together, and the earth was rising into view in all its diversified forms of grandeur. The chaotic mass had already put on the appearance of order, and each succeeding day disclosed new wonders under the invisible hand that was at work to elicit and arrange them. The sixth day was ended ; and now all seemed to be at rest. Every part had found its kindred portion. The classification was complete. The work was one grand and perfect whole. There was no more rushing to and fro. The elements were hushed. It was nature in her infantile repose. The outspread beauties of creation seemed to sleep in calm tranquillity. How natural, then, that, at this juncture, God should pronounce His public benediction upon the new creation ! But equally appropriate was it for Him to appoint a day of rest, and to call the intelligent universe to consider His power and His goodness. In this primeval sabbath, the angelic choirs united in celebrating the praises of God. "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." No temple erected by human skill was needed, where the whole earth was a vast temple whose builder was God, to whom, as the Supreme Divinity, everything in heaven and earth did homage.—*J. Waterbury*.

[14650] It is an appointment not written merely by inspired men, not merely graven on tables of stone, not indented in "lead on the rock for ever," not uttered in the first instance

from the summit of the mount by the voice of the Almighty and amidst the thunders and terrors of Sinai—but infixd in the creative order of the universe, inscribed on the heavens and earth, exhibited in the radiant character of the six days' work, associated with every commemoration of the wisdom and glory of God, promulgated with the majesty of the example of the great Lord of all—and therefore requiring no subsequent enactments, except to incorporate it with the various dispensations of religion, and revive it when forgotten, that it may go on and accompany man so long as he continues upon earth.—*Bp. D. Wilson*.

[14651] The Sabbath is coeval with Paradise. Both date their existence from the first week of time ; and both bear the impress of an unfallen world. There is meet harmony between the two. Hence they stand together on the same page of the Bible, and are linked inseparably together in our recollections of man's primeval condition. As we cast our eyes backwards, they are seen shining like twin stars in the morning sky of the world, giving promise of a refulgent day. Venerable, beneficent, and holy, the Sabbath is the link between the Paradise which has passed away and the Paradise which is yet to come.—*Dr. Wylie*.

## II. RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INSTITUTION FROM MOUNT SINAI.

"And God spake, . . . saying, Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work : but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God" (Exod. xx. 1, 8-10).

[14652] In confirmation of the idea that the Sabbath was appointed first, not in the time of Moses, but when the human family began, it may be observed that the Sabbath is spoken of in Exodus before the publication of the Decalogue, and is then mentioned, not as a new institution, but as one already known : "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord" (Exod. xvi. 23).—*Rev. J. R. Boyd, A.M.*

[14653] It seems to have been justly thought that the word with which the fourth precept begins supposes a prior knowledge of the law ; "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*." It was an institution with which the people were already acquainted ; and they were called upon to keep in mind the sacred nature of the day, and to sanctify it with the greatest care, especially after this *republication of the precept*. It is probable that it had been much neglected in Egypt ; and as the Israelites were there in a state of slavery, it is not likely that they had been permitted by their cruel taskmasters to rest one day in seven. Through the necessity of their circumstances, and their own indifference, the observance of it might have been in a great measure suspended, and this may be the reason why it was inculcated anew, and their attention was so particularly called to it.—*Ibid.*

[14654—14661]

[OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY.]

[14654] The Sabbath embraces in its provisions too large an extent of good for creatures to have imagined, evolves in its course beneficial tendencies which no finite mind could have foreseen, and attains its objects with an unflinching certainty which no dependent being could have commanded. No people without a Sabbath have ever of their own impulse introduced it.—*J. Gilfillan.*

[14655] An ecclesiastical Sabbath may be sanctioned and guarded by the authority of the Church; but it may be questioned whether it is worth guarding. It is a Sabbath without rest, a Sabbath without authority in Scripture, a Sabbath without a Sabbath law. There waits upon it no power from on high; neither has it any charm to win and hold the human heart. No Grahame could draw inspiration for his verse from such a Sabbath as this; nor could any such strains of exquisite feeling as those in which even Burns, the gifted but the reckless and misguided, has paid his tribute to the beauty and blessedness of the preparation for the Sabbath, have been suggested to any poet, however richly endowed, in a country where the Sunday is but an ecclesiastical festival.—*J. H. Rigg, D.D.*

### III. ITS NATURE AND IMPORTANCE.

[14656] It is (1) God's gift to mankind; not, as men often look upon it, as something God has taken from man; as an intolerable burden laid upon the world. So little blind men know of the wisdom, mercy, and goodness of God (Ezek. xx. 12). Physically, temporally, and spiritually, all experience shows that the rest of one day in seven, and the proper observance of the holy Sabbath, is one of God's greatest gifts to a weary world. (2) God's sign, to Israel, and to mankind (Exod. xxxi. 13; Lev. xix. 3, 30, xxvi. 2; Ezek. xx. 12, 20). The sign of separation, of Divine favour, and of His wish for His people's sanctification. How emphatically was this shown in the promises given to Israel on the right observance of the Sabbath, and in the judgment inflicted for its neglect (Isa. lvi. 2, 3; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21). (3) The Lord's day, not ours, to be used as we please, but set apart and consecrated for His service (Rev. i. 10). (4) A type of the eternal rest of heaven (Heb. iv. 9, marg.).—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

### IV. ITS UNIVERSAL AND PERPETUAL OBLIGATIONS.

#### I Bases of its obligations.

[14657] If the institution of the Sabbath were coeval with creation, a command given to our first parents, and based upon principles of universal obligation, if in the Decalogue, as a summary of moral law, it is again repeated, incorporated with Jewish institutions, recognized by Christ, observed by apostles and apostolic men, honoured by the primitive Church, and handed down to succeeding ages, rooted deeply in every

dispensation, and alien to none, spreading widely, and bearing everywhere the fruits of holiness and peace, then, we think that, without hesitation, we may claim for the Sabbath the authority which can alone sanction its observance, or give to it permanent obligation.—*British Quarterly Review.*

[14658] All classes of Christians (with exceptions too inconsiderable to be taken into account) do observe every seventh day as a day for religious worship. It is undeniably true that the whole Christian world, whether Greek, Latin, or Protestant, comprising ninety-nine hundredths of all who bear the Christian name, do observe one day in seven for Divine worship, and have done so from the beginning. This has not been done by accident, or from motives of convenience or expediency. That precisely one day in seven, and not one in six, eight, or ten, has been thus universally observed, is proof positive of its being regarded as a Divine institution. If in any case the rule, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, can be applied with certainty, it is to this.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

[14659] The Decalogue is incorporated into the liturgical or catechetical formulas of all the great divisions of the Christian Church. The Greeks, the Latins, and all Protestants, who have a liturgy, repeat the ten commandments from Sabbath to Sabbath. In their worship the minister says, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy;" and the people answer, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law;" and at the end of the repetition of the Decalogue, they say, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and write these Thy laws in our hearts, we beseech Thee." Here, then, is the testimony, uttered in the ears of God, and before all men, of the whole Christian world to their faith in the continued obligation of the fourth commandment.—*Ibid.*

[14660] It was no more necessary to a Jew than to any other person, to commemorate the perfections of God displayed in the works of creation; it was no more necessary to a Jew to obtain holiness or to increase it; it is no more necessary to a Jew to seek or to obtain salvation. Whatever makes either of these things interesting to a Jew in any degree makes them, in the same degree, interesting to any other man. The nature of the command, therefore, teaches us plainly as the nature of a command can teach, that it is of universal application to mankind. It has, then, this great criterion of a moral precept, viz., universality of application.—*T. Dwight, D.D.*

#### 2 Warrant for its obligations.

(1) *The grand beneficence of the institution apart from any supernatural revelation.*

[14661] The division of time into weeks—six days for labour and one day consecrated to rest from labour—is, first of all, an arrangement in the interest of working men, and, for the sake of greater emphasis, I say of working women.

That rest is for them. It is their privilege. He who, under any pretence, or by any method of inducement, would deprive them of it, is their enemy. He whose influence tends in that direction is regardless of what—whether by a Divine ordinance or by a beneficial and immemorial usage—is really their right. On that day the ordinary operations of industry must rest, that the labouring millions may rest—all for the sake of each, and each for the sake of all. The steam-engine, the water-wheel, all the resounding machinery in which the forces of material nature are harnessed to work in the service of man, must rest, that man himself, the image of God, and therefore nobler than all material things, may have his rightful rest.—*Leonard Bacon, D.D.*

[14662] If the Sabbath is, in its essence, a rest from the work of one week, and a refreshment for the work of another, then one incidental characteristic of it must needs be quiet enjoyment, or rather (to use a word for which there is no exact equivalent) comfort. It is not a fast, but rather a festival. The legitimate aspect of rest from labour is not gloom but cheerfulness. Therefore the right conception of the Sabbath makes it a day of family enjoyment. Honour to the Puritans for their testimony when James I. and Charles I. attempted to pervert the English Sunday into a day of revelry! If we admit that in their controversial zeal, eager to reach the opposite extreme from wrong, the Puritan Sabbath became almost Pharisaic in the rigour and the minuteness of its prohibitions, and more than Pharisaic in its austerity, let us nevertheless remember that, if Puritanism had not protested by word and deed against the Stuart kings, there would not have been in England or in Scotland such a Sabbath as is implied in the "Cottar's Saturday Night."—*Ibid.*

[14663] The ideal Sabbath is the Sabbath at home when the head of the household—farmer or mechanic, merchant or lawyer, capitalist or operative—enjoys his weekly rest among those for whom his six days of labour have been spent. Whether the sabbatic institution was or was not created by the fourth commandment, there seems to be in those words, "Thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant," a glimpse of the restful enjoyment which the day of rest, in the primitive conception of it, would bring to the families that keep it.—*Ibid.*

[14664] Its weekly recurrence produces habits of order and regularity favourable to the due subordination which must exist in every well-governed state. On the Sabbath each cottage assumes its neatest trim; the inmates put off their ordinary garb, every individual being anxious to appear in their best apparel, and the love of dress, sometimes indeed absurd, and sometimes culpable, yet in the degree it obtains among the poor is generally a stimulus to frugality, cleanliness, and industry. The cottager,

resting from his toils, and adorned in his best attire, feels himself raised in the order of being; he becomes of more importance in his own estimation; he sees in himself the dignity of human nature; feelings always to be encouraged in connection with religious principle, inasmuch as they are instrumental to the moral and intellectual advancement of the species.—*G. Holden, A.M.*

[14665] While industry is suspended, while the plough rests in the furrow, while the exchange is silent, while no smoke ascends from the factory, a process is going on quite as important to the wealth of nations as any that is performed on busier days. Man, the machine of machines, compared with which all the contrivances of the Watts and Arkwrights are worthless, is repairing and winding up; so that he returns to his labour on Monday with clearer intellect, with livelier spirits, with renewed bodily vigour.—*Lord Macaulay.*

(2) *The very nature of its typical import is sufficient authority for its permanent obligations.*

[14666] A type being ordained by the Almighty to adumbrate something future, must necessarily continue in force till the thing represented shall have actually come to pass. Its emblematical nature will never expire but with the accomplishment of the thing signified; for a type being of Divine appointment, cannot be supposed to be annulled before the thing typified takes place. If the seventh day's rest were originally designed to be typical, it cannot rationally be believed that it would be abolished till that which it prefigures shall have arrived. The same wise purposes which were answered by its first ordination as a type must remain until that ordination be accomplished. Now the Sabbath, the apostle intimates, is a figure of future happiness of heaven, and, as it can never lose its emblematical character, in which character also it will be ever equally useful, its moral obligation must continue till time be swallowed up in eternity.—*G. Holden, A.M.*

[14667] God rested on the seventh day—not a day limited to one revolution of the earth upon its axis. "The evening and the morning" forms a formula distinguishing the commencement and close of each day of work. But it is dropped on the seventh day. To man the sun rose and set as usual. But God's day of rest endures. Thirty centuries after "God sware if they shall enter into my rest." Forty centuries after Paul declares: "We who believe, do enter into rest." The Sabbath, therefore, does not commemorate a rest that *took* place—but "a rest that remaineth!" Hence a Sabbath of perpetual obligation is alone expressive of God's perpetual rest.—*M. Hill.*

## V. ANTIQUITY OF ITS OBSERVANCE.

[14668] The first indication of this that we meet with is the expression in Gen. iv. 3, refer-



ring to the time when Cain and Abel mutually brought their offerings to the Lord. The very fact of their coming together, and that for the purpose of worship, would of itself lead to the supposition that the time must have been a stated one, and well known and recognized by both; for otherwise we cannot conceive what could have induced the jealous Cain to unite with the pious Abel in the worship of Jehovah. Had there not been a special day set apart for worship, we should rather have expected Cain to avoid that which Abel chose, from hatred and envy of him. It is, however, plainly implied, that there was a certain known time at which they both together worshipped God. The expression denoting this is rendered, in the text of the Bible, "*in process of time it came to pass*," but, in the margin, "*at the end of days it came to pass*." Now, this latter is not only preferable as a construction of the original, but it directly points to that day which was "the end of days," the last, that is, of the seven—the seventh day, on which God ended the work that He had made, and which He had blessed and sanctified; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made. And thus we have the seventh day plainly indicated to us as that which was commonly used for the public worship of God, and was thereby hallowed and honoured in agreement with its Divine appointment.—*J. Jordan.*

[14669] For a moral reason only would men count weeks; and if we find that Noah so counted, we ascertain that, notwithstanding the prevalent wickedness, and without any natural reason for marking the seventh day, which there is no evidence to show that heathens in general have done, Noah kept it holy. Now let us examine. Noah had built the ark under a Divine command, and at length, when the time came for it to be made use of, the warning was given that in seven days thence the deluge would begin. A full week was allowed for preparation, and for the great embarkation of the Patriarch and his family, with the animals to be preserved. Six weeks passed. Seven Sabbaths were counted since the windows of the ark were closed upon him, and then, according to the promise, the rain had ceased. Three times he sought to ascertain the state of the lands around; *first*, on the sixth Sabbath day after the Deluge began, the mountain-tops appeared, the loftiest heights of Ararat rising above the flood. The *second* time he sent forth the dove again on the Sabbath day, still seeking for a token of deliverance. The *third* time, again on a Sabbath day, he did the like. This time the dove brought back the olive-leaf, signal of restoration. Then the Patriarch was satisfied, and made no more anxious inquiries, but waited submissively until the Lord bade them all come out upon dry land again. What shall we call those steadily-recurring seven days, if they were not Sabbath days?—*W. H. Rule, D.D.*

[14670] Revealed in the dawn of creation ;

proclaimed in thunder on Sinai ; revered by God's chosen people, and embodied in their moral and ceremonial law ; exemplified and honoured by Christ ; observed by apostles and apostolic men, and incorporated with the solemn services of the whole Christian Church, until after the lapse of six thousand years this ray of Divine light has reached us just as it fell upon Eden, and shall still beam on until it is lost in the fuller light of the Paradise of God.—*British Quarterly Review.*

[14671] Coeval with marriage, this institution has descended to us, hand in hand with that twin-sister of social bliss ; as if Providence designed, by these two, to save, out of the almost universal wreck which sin has caused, some gleanings of happiness for man.—*Waterbury.*

## VI. ITS DUE OBSERVANCE.

I The whole day should be observed as holy to the Lord.

[14672] To divide a Sabbath day is to mutilate it ; it is scarcely a diminution, it amounts to an absolute transformation of God's institution. To worship on *canonical hours* is more a deference to conventional usages, than obedience to God's command to keep the seventh day *holy*. To spend a part in business or recreation is to render the other parts unavailable for devotion. The spiritual and the secular, devotion and dissipation, have no concord, and cannot coexist. It was on this ground that *one day* was made sacred, and six allowed to be secularized. Essentially differing in tendency, they cannot coalesce. Antagonistic, they destroy each other. We may commingle some things without injury—here the attempt is to adulterate food with poison. A whole Sabbath, or no Lord's day. A partial Sabbath is a total holiday with the multitude.—*Abp. Whately.*

[14673] If the Sabbath be a boon, why be afraid of too much of it ? If it be an infliction or a curse, why tolerate a part of it ? If of the earth, it is earthy, and then call it not the Sabbath of the Lord. If of heaven, it is heavenly ; then who dares, *on principle*, to desecrate even a portion of the Lord's day ? Give your reason for a partial Sabbath, and you are conducted to a whole Sabbath. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is much ;" and the converse, as applied to this day, is equally true. Trifling acts of profanation are dangerous. They insensibly multiply. If one act is tolerated on the same ground—their insignificance, others are indulged in without remorse. The sum of them is a sacred day frittered away ; but the loss is perceived only when, with a Sabbath totally lost, the sense of duty is also gone ! There is no maxim sounder, notwithstanding its origin, than that of the Jewish doctors—"Whatever can possibly be done the day before, or may be deferred till the day following, ought not to drive away the Sabbath."—*Ibid.*

[14674] God *rested*. This would alone have suggested that it was for an example. But He *blessed* it. The suggestion is converted thus into an allurements. His *sanctifying* it, moreover, accompanies the example set, and the motive given, with a prohibition. If God consecrated it, He has denied man its personal or private appropriation.—*M. Hill*.

[14675] Not that God kept it holy Himself, which in no sense is the Divine nature capable of; nor that He purified it, and made it inherently holy, of which the nature of the day is incapable; nor that He celebrated what in itself was holy, as we sanctify His name, which is the act of an inferior towards a superior; but He set it apart to sacred use authoritatively; requiring us to sanctify it in that use obediently.—*J. Owen, D.D.*

[14676] There is an awful regard due to the Sabbath day. When our Lord justifies the cure now wrought on our Sabbath, only on this account, that it was an act of mercy towards a daughter of Abraham; by the exception of such a case He strengthens the general rule, and intimates so holy a day should not, upon light occasions, be otherwise employed than for the proper end of its appointment.—*J. Howe*.

2 It should be a day especially devoted to the Divine worship.

[14677] The command to sanctify or hallow the Sabbath is a command to devote it to a religious use. The word to *sanctify* always means, in such connections, to separate from a common to a sacred use. In Lev. xxiii. 3, it is said, "Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation: ye shall do no work therein; it is the Sabbath of the Lord (or, the Sabbath of Jehovah, *i.e.*, devoted to His service) in all your dwellings." It was the day on which the people were to be convoked for holy purposes. The sacrifices in the temple were multiplied—the people resorted thither to worship, they rejoiced, as the Psalmist said, in the courts of the Lord.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

[14678] The book of Psalms is a collection of devotional exercises for the worship of God, specially on the Sabbath. That day was, therefore, a day set apart for religious services, according to the command, "Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary: I am Jehovah" (Lev. xix. 30). And the prophet said, "The people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the Lord in the Sabbaths" (Ezek. xlvi. 3). Isaiah said, "From one Sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord" (lxvi. 23). In chapter lviii. 13, he says, the blessing of God shall rest on those who shall abstain from doing their pleasure, or seeking mere amusement on God's holy day; and shall call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord (or the day holy to the Lord), honourable; and shall honour Him, not doing their own pleasure, nor speaking their

own words. The Jews ever understood the Sabbath to be a day consecrated to religious worship. The Hebrew Sabbath was not a day for worldly amusement, but a day set apart for religious duties.—*Ibid.*

[14679] The association of the Sabbath with the world's creation renders it impossible to miss the design of its institution. Six days Jehovah spent in furnishing man's abode with all he could desire; one day is set apart that he might rise from the communicated good to the Giver of all these "perfect gifts." This is to "give God the glory due unto His name!"—*M. Hill*.

[14680] The Divine command to keep the seventh day holy implies that something holy is to be performed on it, and in Christian holiness a public expression of prayer and thanksgiving is an essential ingredient.—*G. H. Holden, A.M.*

3 It is a day most appropriate for "doing good," either by active works of charity or direct religious influence.

[14681] It is to us a strange laxity of expression with which one continually meets, that from the restraints of the institution of the Sabbath "works of necessity and charity are excepted." Ought we not to say that we have it, in order that we might "be careful to maintain good works"? It is easy to trace this disparaging expression to its source. Our Lord, in exposing the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, observed, "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." But was Christ describing its character? was He not rather destroying their notions, which had prevented it from becoming the occasion of good-will to men? In opposing the Pharisee, it was enough to affirm, that it is lawful to do well on that day. But, when expounding its nature, irrespective of reference to perverted notions of its design, it is highly objectionable to say, that from Sabbath restrictions works of charity are excepted. While our Lord was teaching the Pharisees what *might* be done, His example teaches us what we *ought* to do. Wycliffe more correctly speaks of them as *proper* to the Sabbath—as part of its *duties*. Of "the three manners of occupation" these works form an essential part of the second and third; "be about with thy speaking to bring thy neighbours to better living. And if they are at debate, bring them by thy power to love and charity and concord. If thou be a priest, be a true lantern to the people, both in speaking and in doing truly all things that belong to a priest." After public worship, "visit such as are sick or in mischief, especially those whom God hath made needy by age, or by other sicknesses—the feeble, the crooked, the lame: these thou shalt relieve with thy goods after thy power, and after their need. But thou shalt not do so to strong and mighty beggars well arrayed, whether they be laymen, priests, or friars. And so men should not be

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idle, but busy on the Sabbath day, about the soul, as men are on the week-day about the body."—*M. Hill*.

[14682] The ends of this Divine institution are these: that Jehovah may be worshipped, man instructed, nations benefited, and families devoted to the service of God.—*Bp. Porteus*.

[14683] The law of the Sabbath forbids all human works, but not Divine, consequently it forbids all those works which are enjoined in the six days, namely, their own works, that is, human works, or works of men's daily vocations.—*Tertullian*.

[14684] If the Christian does not avail himself of the opportunity it affords, to influence their minds for good on the Sabbath, the name of them "is legion" who will bestir themselves on the Sunday to preach infidelity, or to lecture on chartism and socialism. The Sunday newspaper, immoral, irreligious, and infidel publications will be thrust into the hands of the artisan, and pollute the family board of the mechanic. What may be a grand instrument for diffusing Christianity, thus becomes the great engine of destruction to the morals of the industrial classes. From the dust and steam of the mill, from inhaling the impure atmosphere, if not the noxious gases, of some of our manufacturing during six long days, and occasionally nights also, they emerge into the not less impure atmosphere of the tap, the gin palace, the political club-room, or the halls of the socialists. The Sabbath affords the opportunity, and calls aloud to the worshipper, first to revive his own drooping piety, and then to communicate his religion to the irreligious and profane.—*M. Hill*.

4 The sacred rest enjoined must never be desecrated by a perverted interpretation of its meaning.

[14685] There must be something wrong with the locomotive or its load when the chief employment at the stations is to get up steam for the next transit. There must be something wrong in that Christian life which employs the Sabbath, habitually and with deliberate calculation, in "resting up" for the secular exertions it foresees on Monday. The Sabbath is thus hypothecated to Mammon. He who overworks all the week, expecting his Sunday sleep, lounging and dull staying at home to compensate him, mortgages the Lord's day. In a good, healthy life each day's tasks ought to be met and matched by the strength of each day: and the six days of toil to stand like a bodyguard about the freedom of the Sabbath, the princieliest of them all.—*E. J. Haynes*.

[14686] The word *Shabath*, from which the word Sabbath is derived, doth not, as a learned writer observes, signify such a rest, wherein one sitteth still and doth nothing (as the word *Nouch* doth), but only a resting and ceasing from that which he did before.—*Jephson*.

## VII. THE CHANGE FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.

### 1 Reasons for the change.

[14687] The Divine excellence of the work of Christ, and the surpassing preciousness of the blessings of His salvation, are such, that they must not, like the temporal deliverance from Egypt, hold the place of a merely subordinate, secondary, additional reason for the celebration of the Sabbath. They must have the first place. First in the Divine estimate of excellence and glory, they must be first in man's grateful and reverential commemoration. How, then, shall their superior importance be marked in the celebration? Why, in order to give them the lead, the day shall be changed. Creation had the day formerly; redemption shall have it now. Not, in either case, exclusively. The sabbatical commemoration of creation would necessarily, from the time of the fall and the first promise, be associated, in the minds of devout believing worshippers, with the anticipation of the promised redemption; and the Creator be worshipped as the God of salvation. And in like manner, on the Christian Sabbath, the God of grace, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is worshipped, not to the exclusion of His creative power, and majesty, and goodness, although with special reference to His redeeming mercy. Redemption only takes the lead, as it is so pre-eminently entitled to do, among the subjects of celebration; and in this way the change of the day no more alters the nature of the duty, than if redemption had only been introduced as an additional reason, and the former day had been retained.—*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*

[14688] This is the day that saw Christ rise. It marks the spot where He lay, but where He lies no longer. It testifies, more eloquent than pointing hand or mortuary marbles, "He is risen."—*E. J. Haynes*.

### 2 Authority for the change.

[14689] We differ, with regret, from a respectable denomination of Christians, who devote the seventh day of the week to public worship. The concession must be made, that, in arguing for the change of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, from the seventh to the first day, we are able to produce no positive precept; but we consider the example of the apostles, and of the primitive Church under their direction, as of equal authority with a positive precept; because they were infallibly guided by the Spirit in all things relative to doctrine and worship. There are certain facts related in the New Testament which seem to us to show that the apostles and early Christians celebrated the first day of the week as the Sabbath. (1) Immediately after the resurrection of Christ the disciples began to assemble on the first day of the week; and, by meeting repeatedly with them on that day, He gave countenance to the practice. (2) It was continued after His



ascension, and after the descent of the Holy Ghost to lead them into all truth. Thus, at Troas, "when the disciples came together on the first day, to break bread, Paul preached to them" (Acts xx. 7); and the time of meeting is manifestly spoken of as the usual one. (3) On that day the Corinthians were commanded to "lay by them in store, as the Lord had prospered them" (1 Cor. xvi. 2); and it is reasonable to think that the first day was specified as the proper time to make collections for the poor, because it was consecrated to religious duties. (4) It is undoubtedly the same day to which the beloved disciple refers when he says (Rev. i. 10), "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day;" the day which Jesus Christ peculiarly claimed as His own; or the first day of the week, which is consecrated to His honour. Ecclesiastical history shows that this day was intended.—*Rev. J. R. Boyd, A.M.*

[14690] It is not necessary to demonstrate out of Scripture that the apostles ordained the Sunday as a weekly holiday, &c.; for it could not possibly have come to pass that all and every apostolical Church throughout the universal world should so early and in the beginning of their plantation have consented together to make the Sunday a weekly festival, unless they had been directed thus by their founders, the holy apostles themselves.—*Bp. White.*

[14691] What is the nature of the evidence required? Is it an express command? There is none such. But there is what is equivalent. There is the fact that our Lord left authority with His apostles to organize the institutions of His Church; for "whatsoever they bound on earth would be bound in heaven, and whatsoever they loosed on earth would be loosed in heaven." There is the fact that, by their example, they sanctioned the change of the day, and the permanence of the institute. There is the fact that, ere the last survivor of the apostles died, the change had become universal; in other words, there is the evidence of apostolic arrangement, which will be as authoritative with a Christian disciple as apostolic command.—*A. Thomson, D.D.*

[14692] If any verbal command was given to change the Sabbath day, there is no record of it; yet the change was never disputed, and although there is no contemporaneous Jewish writing bearing reference to the fact, yet Lightfoot quotes from the Abodah Zaráh, where the Lord's day is mentioned as the Christian day, יום נוצרי, and the name Nazarene, or Christian, is defined as designating one of the followers of the Man who commanded that the first day of the week should be made a holy day for them. Now, although the Talmud is not admissible as an authority with us, and therefore could not be honestly insisted on by us in an argument with Jews, we may, nevertheless, attach some consideration to the fact that, in a remote century of our era, it was believed by the chief antagonists of Christianity that Christ had commanded

the first day of the week to be their holy day. If nothing more, it is the historical note of an opinion.—*W. H. Rule, D.D.*

[14693] It is morally impossible that all the Christians of all places should unanimously agree in the observance of a particular day, without some direction claiming universal respect, which could scarcely be any other than a Divine and apostolical regulation.—*G. Holden, A.M.*

#### VIII. BLESSEDNESS OF A DAY OF REST.

1 It attracts the heart of man heavenwards, and spiritualizes his mind.

[14694] I have often heard it remarked by Christians of a serious and devout disposition, to whom the sacred day of rest had become, through habit and principle, a season of hallowed delight, that it seemed to their eyes as if, on the Sabbath, the sun did shine more bright, the works of God appear more beautiful, the fields more fresh, the flowers more sweet, and all the face of nature to wear an unusual and a fitting stillness. It is not that the sun does shine more bright, or that the fields are indeed more fresh, or the flowers more sweet upon this than upon any other day. It is only that we are apt to think thus, because our minds are attuned to order, and to piety, and to contemplation. It is because our hearts are harmonized by the general repose and regularity around us. We look upon the joyful countenance of man, we hear no strife, we see no sorrow; labour is at an end, quietness is upon the scene, and our affections are weaned from earthly, and fixed upon heavenly things. The goodness of God and the beauty of holiness force themselves into our thoughts, and in the fulness of the feeling we almost fancy that the inanimate creation has been taught to sympathize with the benevolence of our souls, and to remember, like ourselves, the Sabbath of God. This is mere imagination; but then it is a godly imagination, and, God forbid, that by pointing out the cause of the delusion, I should rob the amiable mind of any Christian of a pleasing sentiment which he would wish to cherish, and which cannot possibly be productive of any evil effects.—*Benson.*

[14695] Oh day, most calm, most bright,  
The fruit of this, the next world's bud,  
The endorsement of supreme delight  
Writ by a friend and with his blood;  
The couch of Time, care's balm and bay,  
The weeks were dark but for thy light,  
Thy torch doth show the way.

—*Herbert.*

2 It is the best preparation for the vicissitudes of the week.

[14696] The Sabbath instils accurate views of the world. It disenchant the imagination of the spells of the great delusion. It sends us forth into the highways and bypaths of life,

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with watchful eyes, an engarrisoned heart, and an attempered spirit. It dignifies our daily duties, instead of suffering us to be undignified and debased by them. It corrects our estimate of temporal prosperity, and enables us to enjoy its favours with moderation and meekness; whilst it unstings the privations of adversity, and helps us to bear them with magnanimity. It superinduces a mood of mind and tone of feeling, calculated to blunt the poignancy of human griefs, to break the shocks of worldly disappointments, and to preserve some cheering beams of hopefulness amidst the darkest day. It imparts equanimity to the disordered passions—acts as an anodyne to the feverish excitement of the mind—smoothes the asperities of the temper—and thus, by restoring the functions of self-control, aids us in triumphing over the adverse circumstances of life. It forewarns and forearms for the conflict between grace and corruption; it rouses the mind into a defiant and repellent attitude to meet the onsets of temptation; and it makes the blackest cloud of impending trial transparent with Divine light, as we enter upon its shadows. Its counsels are generally conducive to our worldly interests, to social elevation, to independence of character, and to an honourable reputation. And this it achieves, not by fostering the spirit of sordid gain, but by enforcing the claims of godliness, whose prerogative it is, to have “the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.”—*Heaven's Antidote to the Curse of Idleness*, by a Journeyman Printer.

[14697] Consider a man in the full flow of weekly business; he is surrounded with things that cry—“Act,” “Decide.” He must be prompt, rapid. He has little time for reflection and moral analysis. If he does right, he does so from the healthy state of his moral instincts. He wants *presence of conscience* as well as *presence of mind*. Now, if on the Lord's day his heart has throbbed healthily with Christian love, and his conscience has been vivified with thoughts of Christian obligation, he will in his business stand forth as a man of Christian integrity and kindliness.—*T. T. Lynch*.

[14698] God Almighty is the Lord of our time, and lends it to us; and, as it is right that we should consecrate this part of that time to Him, so I have found, by strict and diligent observation, that a due observance of the duty of this day has ever had joined to it a blessing on the rest of my time; and the week that has been so begun has been blessed and prosperous to me; and, on the other hand, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week has been unsuccessful and unhappy to my own secular employments; so that I could easily make an estimate of my success in my own secular employments, the week following, by the manner of my passing this day; and this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound observation and experience.—*Sir Matthew Hale*.

[14699] We ought to thankfully regard our Sundays as a blessed and recurring truce amid the trials of our earthly warfare, a truce of God between our nobler selves and those evil powers or mean cares which annoy and beset us; a bright interspace of rest and calm in which we may creep nearer to the Great Light, and see, with eyes less troubled and less clouded, our Father's face. Then, what Elim was to the weary and fainting Israelites as they rested beneath its overshadowing palms, that, week by week, will the Sunday be to us—a sapphire fountain wherein to quench our thirst for all high and holy things amid this earthly wilderness of deceitful images and burning sands, amid this daily dusty path of little anxieties and corroding cares.—*Arch-deacon Farrar*.

[14700] As when man hath run his race, finished his course, and passed through the bigger and larger circle of his life, he then returns unto his eternal rest; so it is contrived and ordered by Divine wisdom as that he shall in a special manner return unto and into his rest once at least within the lesser and smaller circle of every week, that so his perfect blessedness to come might be foretasted every Sabbath day, and so be begun here; that look as man standing in innocence, had cause thus to return from the pleasant labours of his weekly paradise employments, so man fallen, much more from his toilsome and wearisome labours, to this his rest again.—*T. Shepherd*.

[14701] Sunday is to the rest of the week in spirituals what summer is to the rest of the year in temporals. It is the chief time for gathering knowledge to last you through the following week, just as summer is the chief season for gathering food to last through the following twelvemonth. Do you make the most of this weekly summer? Do you, like wise sons, gather instruction by listening to the reader and the preacher? Do you gather fresh stores of strength by diligent and humble attendance on the ordinances of God? Or do you not?—*A. W. Hare*.

#### IX. ARGUMENTS FOR A DAY OF REST.

The many and great advantages therefrom resulting.

##### (1) *Spiritual and religious.*

[14702] Those who have served a battery upon the battlefield tell us that at intervals they are forced to pause, in calm self-possession, heeding not the awful excitement, that the guns may cool; yes, and that the smoke may lift to furnish accurate aim; yes, and because ammunition is exhausted. No Christian can fight the battle of the week without the quiet Sabbath to cool off his guns. He needs repose of soul. He wants heavenly breezes to lift the earth-lowering shadows. He must replenish his store from the secret place of prayer and meditation.—*E. J. Haynes*.

[14703] Like those brilliant dyes which our cold and watery atmosphere refuses to bring out,

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but which we are compelled to send away to purer skies and a less diluted sun, there are many devout emotions and Divine affections which need a Sabbath atmosphere to give them their empyreal tone and heavenly hue; and these have been the days when love to the Saviour, and zeal for God, and good-will to man, the most benevolent feelings, and the most unworldly, have glowed to intensest lustre. And like those birds which sing among the branches, but which the roar of battle scares away, many of our sweetest joys take wing, and quit the din of the daily battle; but to the peace and quiet of these Sabbaths the startled happiness returns—the tender and hallowed love which always hovers over the Christian's home, but only alights on days of leisure—the communion of saints, which is in the creed all the week, but in the heart this day—the hope, and assurance, and joy, which are seldom more remote from a child of God than a Sabbath day's journey—these often return; and that blessing, comprehensive of every other, the Comforter returns, and the joyful, thankful believer finds himself "in the Spirit on the Lord's day."—*J. Hamilton, D.D.*

[14704] By keeping a Sabbath we acknowledge a God, and declare that we are not atheists; by keeping one day in seven we protest against idolatry, and acknowledge that God who in the beginning made the heavens and the earth; and by keeping our Sabbath on the first of the week we protest against Judaism, and acknowledge that God who, having made the world, sent His only-begotten Son to redeem mankind.—*Bp. Horsley.*

[14705] The Sabbath is a great national barrier against an almost universal infidelity; and never will the champions of atheism and profligacy have made such progress towards uprooting Christianity from a land, as if they prevailed to the doing away with an institution that fixes a time for the religious instruction of its people. Whilst they leave us the Sabbath we have something like a fair opportunity for grappling with their machinations; but let once the edict go forth, "No more Sabbath mourns shall break in their beauty and blessedness on our cities and villages," and every effort of Christian philanthropy would be immediately paralysed, the reign of heathenism will almost have commenced, and by putting an end to all Sabbath ministrations you will have destroyed that vast moral hold, essential to the well-being and perhaps the very existence of the community, which the revealed will of the Creator still possesses over multitudes who profess not to be in heart and soul Christians.—*H. Melvill, B.D.*

[14706] General experience abundantly proves that, constituted as human nature is, and circumstance as the vast majority of our race are, and ever must be, some such appointment as the Sabbath is indispensable to the keeping alive of religion in the hearts and habitations of our people. For the question is not how a man of

retired habits and abundant means could keep his godliness in vigour without a Sabbath day, but how the erasure of this day from the list of moral appointments—in other words, the degrading of it to common uses—would affect those whose waking hours on other days are almost wholly engrossed by traffic or toil.—*A. Thomson, D.D.*

[14707] Extinguish the Sabbath, and religion has only the little intervals between the hours of labour in which to proclaim her lessons and to assert her claims. And if, even with the Sabbath on her side which commands all to be silent that she may be heard, she finds it difficult to maintain her supremacy, what would be the case were her voice only to be raised amid the thousand discordant sounds of secular pursuits? You bid her fashion the iron, and you will not give her time to beat it; you bid her paint her image, but it is upon moving canvas. With one hand you propose to draw water from the cistern, while, with the other, you have cut off the communication of that cistern with the lake that feeds it. That man may be kept religious, he must give to the subjects of religion more than the mere snatches of time or half thoughts; hours upon hours must be set apart, in which its hallowed associations and holy employments shall have opportunity to exert their full influence. Deprive him of this, and your every-day Sabbath will soon turn out to mean no Sabbath at all.—*Ibid.*

[14708] The whole essence of true religion comes to view on the Sabbath; the difference between the Church and the world is openly manifested. In the wilderness of the world's indifference towards its Creator, where there is no recognition of God, there is an oasis—a people serving God in spirit and in truth, and entrusted by Himself with His own beautiful service. And still, in the way and manner that the Lord's day is spent, there is afforded the clearest evidence of the relation in which a people stand to the Lord, and He to them. The day of the Lord is the gauge of the religious life. It is a grievous error for any one to attempt to blur and obliterate the seal which God has stamped upon His Church, that He might distinguish it from the world, and render it capable of being discerned and approached by the world—an error that can only have its ultimate root in ungodliness. And it is an object worthy of all the efforts that can be put forth by the Church and by individuals to have this seal made to exhibit its brightest lustre.—*Hengstenberg.*

[14709] The streams of religion run deep or shallow, according as the banks of the Sabbath are kept up or neglected.—*Anon.*

[14710] It is important to consider what an amount of benevolent Christian effort has been created by the institution of the Sabbath. If all those who have to secure their livelihood by bodily or mental exertion were obliged to labour through seven days of the week as they now



labour through six of them, how few would have time or strength to visit the poor, to teach the young, or to speak of Christ to the ungodly! But through the ordinance of the Sabbath hundreds of thousands of persons in this country, who devote six days to hard labour, bodily or mental, give a part of their Sabbath to the religious instruction of the young and ignorant. Without the Sabbath nearly all the inappreciable good which is now done by Sabbath schools, and much of that which attends the visiting of the sick and distressed in cities, would vanish from the land.—*Baptist Noel*.

[14711] Without the day of the Lord the Church can never attain its end to do justice and righteousness. When the observance of this day is neglected, in the same degree will the observance of righteousness be neglected too. . . . Let him who feels that he makes no progress, and must confess that he is a barren tree, first of all consider how he observes the Lord's day.—*Hengstenberg*.

(2) *Individual, social, and domestic.*

[14712] Even a man who has no religion at all ought not to regard it as a hardship, that he should be required, in common with his neighbours, to abstain from his ordinary business one day in the week; but should rather regard it as an advantage to be able to purchase a day of leisure so cheaply. . . . So far . . . is it from being any hardship to prevent by law the opening of shops on Sundays, that there *would* be a hardship in the want of such a law.—*Abp. Whately*.

[14713] If we turn from our own employments and pleasures on the Lord's day to read the Scriptures or hear them expounded, what are the exhortations addressed to us? We are counselled to be sober, chaste, upright, diligent—to cherish, in other words, those principles and habits by which virtuous persons elevate themselves in society; by which ruinous follies are avoided, and confidence in us is established, and influential observers are favourably disposed towards us, and our progress to useful and honourable station is in many ways expedited.—*David King, LL.D.*

[14714] To how many hundreds of thousands of us are our children only seen for a few minutes at our hasty meals. When we return from our labours their eyes are folded in the sleep of childhood, tired with its pastime, or worn with its care, and we ourselves, weary with a hard day's work, hasten to receive the restorative influences of sleep. But the Sabbath is for us and them. It is then that the hard worker assumes the true dignity of man, and feels the high duty and holy office of a father; it is then, as his young ones hang upon him in happy affection, whilst his heart gushes forth like a pent-up spring that finds a way for its waters, with abounding gratitude to his Father for these best blessings; then it is that he instils from his awakened soul the precepts and promises of the

Word of God, into the recipient and retentive spirits of his children; and thus from him they receive the colouring of mind and heart which will darken or beautify their way through life into eternity.—*Sabbath Labour is Seventh Day Slavery, Prize Essay*.

(3) *National and political.*

[14715] Let any one conceive of the myriads of churches, chapels, and school-rooms, which are open every Sabbath to the millions upon millions of children and adults who are assembled within their walls, and also of the amount of moral and religious instruction which is thus made to bear upon these masses of our population, and imagine, if he can, the quantity of sin which is *kept* out and *rooted* out of the public mind, and the amount of virtue and piety which, through God's blessing, is introduced. Were all these churches, chapels, and school-rooms closed, even for a few months; were sermons discontinued, and Sabbaths employed in business or amusement, not only would the influence of religion over the minds of the pious be well-nigh extinguished, but the bond of moral obligation over the unconverted would be relaxed, the laws of God and man would be trampled under foot, and an awful reign of unbridled sin commence. "Blind is that country, and wretched must it be, where pure religion is not taught, and where the worth of the faithful watchmen is not known, till the want of those true friends of the prince and of the people introduces envy, strife, confusion, and every evil work."—*J. Angel James*.

[14716] We wish to see secured for the artisan time for recreation, but we wish to see secured for him time for religion too; and shall we be asked to sacrifice the more important for the less important? Would not recreation itself, without intelligence and morality, rapidly degenerate into brutal licentiousness? And how are these to be secured by those sons of toil without a weekly recurring day given to converse with Divine truths and eternal realities? Let the real state of the case be clearly seen. The hours for recreation on common days have gradually passed from the hands of the working man; commercial enterprise has bought them up and changed them into hours of toil; and now when the question is asked, What time shall he have for recreation? the answer given is, his Sabbath day. Well, let us suppose the presumptuous and impious demand yielded, what security has he that his Sabbath, once given to recreation, would not soon be demanded for toil also, and the poor deluded artisan discover, when it was too late, that that blessed institute which had enshrined his dignity, his liberty, and his immortal interests, was lost; and that, in an evil hour, he had sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage? The man of toil is insulted by that sentimentalism which never looks above his physical condition, and shuts out the idea that he is an immortal being,

travelling to an eternal world.—*A. Thomson, D.D.*

[14717] If keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind.—*Addison.*

[14718] I look abroad over the map of popular freedom in the world, and it does not seem to me accidental that Switzerland, Scotland, England, and the United States, the countries which best observe Sunday, constitute almost the entire map of safe popular government.—*Joseph Cook.*

[14719] Hallam says that European despotic rulers have cultivated, as Charles II. did in the day of the "Book of Sports," a love of pastime on Sabbaths, in order that their people might be more quiet under political distresses. "A holiday Sabbath is the ally of despotism." Wherever the Romish or Parisian Sunday has prevailed for generations, it has made the whole lives of peasant populations a prolonged childhood.—*Ibid.*

(4) *Medical and hygienic.*

[14720] If it is a great sanitary arrangement, the Sabbath of rest may be as reasonably enforced as any of the regulations proceeding from the General or Local Boards of Health. If Sunday labour is detrimental to the health of apprentices and shop assistants, the government is justified in prohibiting it. If the practice of repairing machinery on a Sunday leads to numerous preventable accidents, the arm of the law may as freely be brought to bear upon it as upon our railway directors.—*M. Hill.*

[14721] The body and mind of man must have rest. They must have more than the season of sleep allows. Besides, it is according to the analogy of nature. The works of God, though they seem so full of variety and of change, have their Sabbaths—their seasons of repose. The ocean is not always agitated; but sleeps, at times, in unbroken tranquillity. The winds are not always in motion; but are often hushed, as if the zephyr even had ceased to breathe. The bird is not for ever on the wing, nor the beast of the forest always in pursuit of his prey. Behold the seasons! See how nature comes forth recruited after her temporary repose! And shall man wish to ply with incessant toil the poor body, so easily fatigued, and so soon to faint and die? Shall he deny the necessity of a Sabbath to eke out its little strength, or impugn that Divine wisdom which has appointed it for so beneficent a purpose?—*Waterbury.*

[14722] I am thoroughly convinced that six days are the really true, fit, and adequate measure of time for work, whether as regards the physical strength of man, or his perseverance in a uniform occupation.—*A. Von Humboldt.*

[14723] The use of the Sabbath, medically speaking, is that of a day of rest. It is a day

of compensation for the inadequate restorative power of the body under continual labour and excitement. A physician always has respect to the restorative power, because, if once this be lost, his healing office is at an end. The ordinary exertions of man run down the circulation every day of his life; and the first general law of his nature, by which God prevents man from destroying himself, is the alternating of day with night, that repose may succeed action. But though night apparently equalizes the circulation well, yet it does not sufficiently restore its balance for the attainment of a long life. Hence one day in seven, by the bounty of Providence, is thrown in as a day of compensation, to perfect, by its repose, the animal system.—*Parre, M.D.*

[14724] I have found it essential to my own well-being, as a medical man, to abridge my labours on the Sabbath to what is actually necessary. I have frequently observed the premature death of physicians from continued exertion. I have advised the clergyman, in lieu of his Sabbath, to rest one day in the week. I have seen many destroyed by their duties on that day. I would say further, that, quitting the grosser evils of mere animal living from overstimulation, and undue exercise of body, the working of the mind in one continual train of thought, is the destruction of life in the most distinguished classes of society, and that senators themselves need reform in that respect. I have seen many of them destroyed by neglecting this economy of life.—*Ibid.*

[14725] Apart entirely from any consideration of the religious sanctions which hallow a certain day of the seven, it appears to me that its value is literally and really inestimable to the overworked and worried man, if it be kept sacred, not merely from worldly work, but from the intrusion of worldly cares and thoughts. The thing can be done. As the last hour of Saturday strikes, the burden may fall from the mind: the pack of worries may be whipped off; and you may feel that you have entered on a purer, freer, happier life, which will last for four-and-twenty hours. I believe that a strict resolution to preserve the Lord's day sacred (in no Puritanical sense) would lengthen many a valuable life; would preserve the spring of many a noble mind; would hold off, in some cases, the approaches of imbecility or insanity.—*A. K. H. Boyd.*

## X. OBJECTIONS OF ANTI-SABBATARIANS CONSIDERED.

I. First objection: That we live under a new and more spiritual dispensation.

[14726] Is the secularizing of the Sabbath more befitting a spiritual dispensation than the religious observance of it?—more calculated to promote the Divine life in the soul than the dedication of it to the exercises of devotion and the means of heavenly-mindedness? Is a spiri-

tual dispensation a dispensation of release from spiritual exercises? Or is there any one Divine institution more eminently fitted for the advancement of spirituality of mind than the day of God when duly observed? So strong is the impression of this in my mind, both from the obvious reason of the thing, and from the general experience, recorded from many a happy and grateful heart, of the children of God—that it forms a powerful presumptive argument for the unlikelihood (I had almost said the impossibility) of its having, under the new economy, been set aside. A spiritual dispensation is not a dispensation, surely, under which the means of spirituality are taken away! And when I consider the spiritual constitution of the Sabbath, and its adaptation to spiritual improvement, and the fearful anti-spiritual consequences of its cessation, I cannot bring myself to imagine that such an institution should be ranked by the inspired apostle among the worldly rites of a transitory ceremonial—the beggarly elements of an introductory and carnal dispensation—the burdensome observances of a “yoke which neither the Jews of his time nor their fathers were able to bear;” that he should characterize it as “against us, and contrary to us, nailed to the cross, and taken out of the way!”—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

[14727] Is it characteristic of a spiritual dispensation that every day should be alike? So say some. And to make the sentiment sound more spiritually, they express it by every day's being a Sabbath. But who does not see, whether judging theoretically or experimentally, that *every* day a Sabbath is the same as *no* day a Sabbath? that every day alike is not every day alike spiritual, but every day alike secular?—*M. Hill.*

[14728] That a Christian should be solicitous to add as much more of his time for the cultivation of the principles and affections of godliness as he can redeem from the necessary engagements of this world, we can easily understand. But that such a man, a man under the real power of heartfelt, evangelical piety, can listen with complacency to reasonings that would rob him of a portion of his spiritual enjoyment, and abridge the instituted means of his advancement in grace, and in “meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light,” it is surely no very wide or unwarrantable breach of charity to doubt.—*Ibid.*

2 Second objection: That no mention is made of its appearance during the patriarchal age.

[14729] There are omissions in the sacred history much more extraordinary. Excepting Jacob's supplication at Bethel, scarcely a single allusion to prayer is to be found in all the Pentateuch; yet, considering the eminent piety

of the worthies recorded in it, we cannot doubt the frequency of their devotional exercises. Circumcision being the sign of God's covenant with Abraham, was beyond all question punctually observed by the Israelites, yet, from their settlement in Canaan, no particular instance is recorded of it till the circumcision of Christ, comprehending a period of about 1,500 years. No express mention of the Sabbath occurs in the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the first and second of Samuel, or the first of Kings, though it was doubtless regularly observed all the time included in these histories. In the second book of Kings, and the first and second of Chronicles, it is mentioned only twelve times, and some of them are merely repetitions of the same instance. If the Sabbath is so seldom spoken of in this long historical series, it can be nothing wonderful if it should not be mentioned in the summary account of the patriarchal ages.—*G. Holden, A.M.*

[14730] An objection derived from things not being expressly mentioned so often as we might please to expect, is wholly inconclusive. No mention is made of sacrifices from the time of Abel till the deluge, a period of 1,500 years, nor from the arrival of Jacob at Beersheba till the deliverance from Egypt, a space of two or three hundred more; but does this prove that sacrifices were not offered? The ordinance of the red heifer, again, is never once noticed from the period of the Pentateuch till the close of the Old Testament; but the apostle refers to it, and argues from it in the New, as a rite well known, and in constant use. Even in the book of Psalms and in the Prophets, the Sabbath is seldom expressly mentioned, except when the neglect of it provoked the indignation of the Almighty.—*Bp. Wilson.*

## XI. HOMILETICAL REMARKS.

Persons particularly addressed in the fourth commandment.

*Each head of a household.*

[14731] “Remember the Sabbath day, &c.; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter,” &c. This part of the precept goes not only to extend the obligation, but also to secure the privileges of the Sabbath to every class and condition of men. The wife, indeed, is not mentioned, because she is supposed to be one with the husband, and as co-operating with him of course in carrying into execution every commandment of God. But the rest of the family, sons and daughters, male and female servants, are specified in such a way as to throw upon heads of families the responsibility of uniting all their household establishment in the due observance of the day.—*Prof. Bush.*



## PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN  
GOD AND MAN*(Continued).*

## DIVISION C.

## CHRISTIAN GRACES, AND DUTIES.

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# RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(Continued).

## DIVISION G.

### CHRISTIAN GRACES.

#### INTRODUCTION.

##### I. THE PECULIAR PRAISE OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

[14732] Almost every excellence in the science of morals has been attained by sages, except completeness and consistency; the completeness and consistency of its morality is the peculiar praise of the ethics which the Bible has taught. Often, if we might so speak, the strength of the materials of six parts of morality have been brought together wherewith to construct a seventh part; and so much of magnificence and elevation has by this means been obtained for the single virtue, whether it were fortitude, courage, patriotism, or beneficence, that mankind, in their admiration, have forgotten the cost at which it has been produced.—*Isaac Taylor.*

##### II. THE PRACTICAL NATURE OF RELIGION.

1 True religion consists in doing what becomes our relation to God, in conformity to His nature and in willing obedience to His holy will.

[14733] Religion consisteth not in fair professions and glorious pretences, but in real practice; not in a pertinacious adherence to any sect or party, but in a sincere love of goodness, and dislike of naughtiness, wherever discovering itself; not in vain ostentations and flourishes of outward performance, but in an inward good complexion of mind, exerting itself in works of true devotion and charity; not in a nice orthodoxy or politic subjection of our judgments to the peremptory dictates of men, but in a sincere love of truth, in a hearty approbation of and compliance with the doctrines fundamentally good, and necessary to be believed; not in harsh censuring and virulently inveighing against others, but in careful amending our own ways; not in a peevish crossness and obstinate repugnancy to received laws and customs, but in a quiet and peaceable submission to the express laws of God and lawful commands of man; not in a furious zeal for or against trivial circumstances, but in a conscionable practising the substantial parts of religion; not in a frequent talking or contentious disputing about it, but in

a ready observance of the unquestionable rules and precepts of it.—*I. Barrow.*

[14734] Religion, in its practical aspects, consists in nothing else but doing what becomes our relation to God, in a conformity or similitude to His nature, and in a willing obedience to His holy will, to which by potent incentives it allures and persuades us, by representing to us His transcendently glorious attributes, conspicuously displayed in the frame, order, and government of the world, that wonderful power which erected this great and goodly fabric, that incomprehensible wisdom which preserves it in a constant harmony, that immense goodness which hath so carefully provided for the various necessities, delights, and comforts of its innumerable inhabitants.—*Ibid.*

2 True religion is not speculating, not debating, but doing.

[14735] It is well to think well; it is Divine to act well.—*Horace Mann.*

[14736] The life of man is made up of action and endurance; and life is fruitful in the ratio in which it is laid out in noble action or in patient perseverance.—*Canon Liddon.*

[14737] One thing, and only one, in this world has eternity stamped upon it. Feelings pass; resolves and thoughts pass; opinions change. What you have done lasts—lasts in you. Through ages, through eternity, what you have done for Christ, that, and only that, you are.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

[14738] Existence was given us for action, rather than indolent and aimless contemplation; our worth is determined by the good deeds we do, rather than by the fine emotions we feel. They greatly mistake who suppose that God cares for no other pursuit than devotion.—*E. L. Magoon.*

3 True religion consists in something more than mere orthodoxy.

*Nothing can be more absurd and perilous than to content ourselves with only a notional knowledge of religion.*

[14739] Orthodoxy is much talked of, but little understood. The word properly signifies right

thinking, or judging; having a right belief of religious articles; or having a good understanding of them. Some say they are orthodox, because they think just as their fathers did, or as this or that man or church doth. And they esteem others heretical and wicked, because they have not the same sentiments as themselves. Every good man is orthodox, and every wicked man is a heretic. Truth of thought, or thinking rightly of points of divinity, or articles of faith, is undoubtedly a matter of importance. But as to the main sentiments, every good man is sound. No one who doeth God's commandments will err fundamentally, so as to endanger his salvation. An ungodly, carnal, worldly man, is clearly and lamentably erroneous. Accordingly, St. Paul having reminded Titus that the Creteans, among whom he then was, were liars, passionate, and lazy gluttons, commands him to "rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus i. 12, 13); intimating plainly that they were not orthodox while they were vicious. This shows how absurd it is to prefer sound notions to a good heart and a holy life; how dangerous it is for men to trust to right apprehensions of Christian doctrines, while they break the commandments of God.—*J. Orion.*

- 4 True religion consists in something more than mere resolutions and preparatory exercise.

[14740] I have never heard anything about the *resolutions* of the disciples, but a great deal about the *Acts* of the Apostles.—*Horace Mann.*

[14741] Show me not the wrestler in the place of exercise, but in the lists; and religion not at the season of hearing, but at the season of practice.—*Chrysostom.*

- 5 True religion, though not impertinently obtrusive, has its conspicuous and distinctive marks.

[14742] Whatever is current among a Christian people ought to bear the distinct effigy of its king. Not, however, that it belongs to religion to be impertinently obtrusive: this is no more a sign of its depth or sincerity than it would be a sign of your wealth to keep chinking your few guineas in everybody's ears: a practice which, on the contrary, would lead the shrewder to divine that he who makes so much of a little can have but little to make much of.—*Guesses at Truth.*

### III. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THE CHRISTIAN REGARDS DUTIES.

[14743] Duty is always one and the same—a debt always due to God. But the debt of obedience being withheld, and the death of suffering being incurred, the believer is taught to plead his discharge for suffering under Christ, and his fulfilling of obedience in the righteousness of Christ. With this faith he has a delightful prospect of duty. God is now at peace with him. God loves him in His Son. It is his

high privilege to enjoy the sense of those distinguishing favours. For this end he is admitted to walk with his God. What an honour is this! Having received the adoption of sons, he is blessed with his Father's love, and is taken into near fellowship with Him. What a happiness is this! "Son, all that I have is thine: it is freely given to thee in Jesus, and thou art now called upon to enjoy me and mine in thy holy walk." Here duty becomes his privilege. It is exalted and spiritualized into a gospel grace. He is bound to it, but it is by the cords of love. The pleasing bonds of gratitude tie his heart to obedience, to a free, holy, evangelical obedience. He obeys, not as a slave, but as a son—not for fear, but because Christ has set him at liberty—not that God may accept, pardon, and justify him, but because God has done all for him, and will do all in him—not that he may have heaven for his obedience, but because heaven is reserved for him, and he for it.—*W. Romaine, A.M.*

[14744] The Christian therefore looks at duty, as greatly refined by the gospel. Every act of it, done in faith, is an act of fellowship with the Father and with the Son; and by the grace of the Spirit every act brings the Father's love through the Son's salvation into experience. He has communion with his God in all he does. This ennobles duty. It is hereby raised to a Divine honour: for it is hereby made, to them who are in Christ, the highest privilege they can have on this side of heaven.—*Ibid.*

[14745] Grace, then, makes us love our duty, and so takes the place of the law: we want no law to make us eat and drink so long as our bodies are in health; the natural appetite comes instead of the law, and how much surer and better does it accomplish its purpose. So it is with our souls, when they have gained a spiritual appetite for their food; the law is dead to them then, and their own inclination is far better than the law.—*T. Arnold.*

[14746] Not infrequently are Christians heard to speak of duties as crosses to be borne; and I am convinced that some among them regard their performance as a complete compliance with the law of self-denial. It is a cross to pray, to speak, to commend Christ to others, to attend church, to frequent the social meetings, and, indeed, to do anything of a distinctly religious nature. By the force of their will, and with the aid of sundry admonitions, they bring themselves up to the discharge of those obligations; but on the whole, they feel that it should entitle them to a place in "the noble army of martyrs." I am sorry to dissipate the comfortable illusion; but I am compelled to assure them that they totally misapprehend the doctrine of our Lord. He said that it was His meat and drink to do the will of His Father; and He never once refers to duty in any other way than as a delight. The cross was something distinct from it.—*G. C. Lorimer.*



[14747] The moment you can make a very simple discovery ; viz., that obligation to God is your privilege, and is not imposed as a burden, your experience will teach you many things—that duty is liberty, that repentance is a release from sorrow, that sacrifice is gain, that humility is dignity, that the truth from which you hide is a healing element that bathes your disordered life, and that even the penalties and terrors of God are the artillery only of protection to His realm.—*H. Bushnell.*

[14748] We urge the duties of Christianity upon the consciences of men ; but duties are constraints till they are changed into charms by love. The very word duty is a harsh one, until the heart grasps it, and then the lowliest service and the boldest endeavour are cheerfully accepted and welcomed. To win men to the performance of Christian duties it is necessary to win them to the love of Him who requires them, and to the love of those for whose benefit they are required.—*Dean Stanley.*

#### IV. NATURE, REQUISITES, AND ADJUNCTS OF CHRISTIAN DUTIES.

- 1 One Christian duty cannot be exchanged for another, and three virtues will not make amends for one remaining vice.

[14749] He that oppresses the poor cannot make amends by giving good counsel ; and if a priest be simoniacal he cannot be esteemed righteous before God by preaching well, and taking care of his charge. To be zealous for God and for religion is good, but that will not legitimate cruelty to our brother. It is not enough for a man to be a good citizen, unless he be also a good man ; but some men build their houses with half a dozen cross sticks, and turf is the foundation, and straw is the covering, and they think they dwell securely ; their religion is made up of two or three virtues, and they think to commute with God, some good for some bad, *πολλὰ μεμιγμένα, πολλὰ δὲ αἰσχροῖ* as if one deadly wound were not enough to destroy the most healthful constitution in the world.—*Ep. Taylor.*

- 2 The performance of Christian duties should be spontaneous, zealous, and loving.

[14750] Good duties must not be pressed or beaten out of us, as the waters came out of the rock when Moses smote it with his rod, but must freely drop from us as myrrh from the tree or honey from the comb. If a willing mind be wanting, there wants that flower which should perfume our obedience, and make it a sweet smelling savour to God.—*J. Watson.*

[14751] He is a profane person that performs holy duties slightly and superficially ; all our duties ought to be warmed with zeal, winged with affection, and shot up to heaven from the whole bent of the soul. Our whole hearts must go into them ; and the strength and vigour of our spirits must diffuse themselves into every part of them. . . . Truly all our Christian sacri-

fices, both of praise and prayer, must be offered up to God with fire ; and that fire which alone can sanctify them must be darted down from heaven ; the celestial flame of zeal and love which comes down from heaven, and hath a natural tendency to ascend thither again, and to carry up our hearts and souls upon its wings with it.—*Ep. Hopkins.*

- 3 Christian duties must be prosecuted with fixed determination and indomitable courage.

[14752] How often hast thou found thyself at the entrance into a duty becalmed, as a ship which at first setting sail hath hardly wind to swell its sails, while under the shore and shadow of the trees, but meets a fresh gale of wind when got into the open sea ? Yea, didst thou never launch out to duty as the apostles to sea with the wind in thy face, as if the Spirit of God, instead of helping thee on, meant to drive thee back, and yet hast found Christ walking to thee before the duty was done, and a prosperous voyage made of it at last ? Abraham saw not the ram which God had provided for his sacrifice till he was in the mount. In the mount of prayer God is seen, even when the Christian does often go up the hill towards duty with a heavy heart, because he can as yet have no sight of Him. Turn not therefore back, but go on with courage—He may be nearer than thou thinkest. "In that same hour," saith Christ, "it shall be given unto you."—*Gurnall.*

#### V. THE MEASURE OF THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Not our native resources, but the infinite perfection of Christ Himself.

[14753] We dwell in Him ; He dwells in us ; and He is the living prophecy of the height and glory of our holiness—a prophecy never to be fulfilled on earth or in heaven, but perpetually moving towards fulfilment, through struggle and sorrow and frequent defeat in this world, and through endless ages of joy and triumph in the world to come.—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

#### VI. NATURE AND MANIFESTATION OF THE GRACES.

[14754] Christian graces are natural faculties which have blossomed under the influence of Divine love.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[14755] People, unless sick, come out of doors ; so graces, if healthy, manifest themselves in the life.—*Anon.*

[14756] The Christian graces, like perfumes, the more they are pressed by affliction the sweeter they smell ; or, like the stars, they appear best in the darkness of trouble ; or, like the snow, though cold and uncomfortable, yet it warms and nourishes the earth in the winter.—*Ibid.*

[14757] The graces of the Spirit are like a

row of pearl, which hang together upon the string of religion, and serve to adorn Christ's Bride.—*Ibid.*

## VII. THE ONENESS AND CONSOLIDARITY OF THE GRACES.

### I All the graces of Christianity always go together.

[14758] They so go together that where there is one, there are all, and where one is wanting, all are wanting. Where there is faith, there are love, and hope, and humility; and where there is love, there is also trust; and where there is a holy trust in God, there is love to God; and where there is a gracious hope, there also is a holy fear of God.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

[14759] One virtue without another is either none at all or imperfect.—*Gregory the Great.*

[14760] The virtues which are in the mind of man, although they are each conceived differently, are no ways separated from one another, so that whosoever should be equal in fortitude, for instance, would be equal in prudence too and temperance and justice. For if you should say that they are equal in fortitude, but that the one excels in prudence, it follows that the fortitude of the other is less prudent; and so they are not equal in fortitude either, since the fortitude of the one is more prudent. And so you will find as to the other virtues, if you go over them with the same consideration.—*Augustine.*

### 2 All our graces are to be cultivated, to the neglect of none.

[14761] If one side of a tree grows, and the other does not, the tree acquires a crooked form—is a misshapen thing. Nor are monsters among mankind made only by want of parts, as when the body wants a limb, or a face an eye, or a leg a foot, or the arm a hand; but also by some one part growing in excess of others. Analogous in its results to this is the unequal growth of Christian graces. For example, let godly fear, which is so strong a safeguard of the soul, grow out of due proportion to faith, and the result is a gloomy, despondent, unhappy Christian. Or, let that zeal which makes us like a flaming fire in the service of our God, grow more than knowledge, prudence, wisdom; and, like a machine without director or balance-wheel, generating into extravagance, carries men away into the regions of wild fanaticism.—*Dr. Guthrie.*

[14762] Faith, hope, and love are three sister graces which are inseparable only in thought, not in the real Christian life. Counterfeits of these graces when viewed separately may exist, which are difficult to distinguish from the reality. For instance, one may seem to possess faith, another hope, another love; but it rarely, if ever, happens that a mere professor even seems to have these three graces in any degree harmoniously combined in his character. Hence a useful test for self-examination as to whether

we are in "the faith," and making Christian progress, is the *co-existence* and *harmonious growth* of these three leading Christian excellences.—*C. N.*

## VIII. ST. PETER'S CHOIR OF THE GRACES.

### I Their inter-relations and harmonious connection.

[14763] Beneath the observant eye of their perfect exemplar, Christians must needs grow in likeness to Him; until they come to add to their indispensable faith in Him, *virtue*, to make it energetic and fearless in every hour; to their virtue, *knowledge*, to enlighten and direct it; to their knowledge, *temperance*, to chasten and sanctify it; to their temperance, *patience*, to give it power and perpetuity; to their patience, *godliness*, to elevate it by heavenward aspirations; to their godliness, *brotherly kindness*, that it may flow out to all who bear the Divine image; and to brotherly kindness *charity*, that it may expand into that universal love to man which is the very essence of God Himself.—*Anon.*

[14764] Faith is the leader of this choir; virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly love, and charity, are marshalled under faith as their leader, to swell the praises of Christ, from an obedient and loving soul. Faith is the *clef* which gives the key in which these seven notes of the perfect scale are sounded. Faith organizes and sustains the chorus, and has a place for each in its well-trained band. When all are assembled, faith drills them into harmony. But if any one be wanting, faith itself appears defective, and the soul is out of tune. Therefore these virtues are graduated to each other, and linked together as one. As an old writer observes, "Each several degree induces and facilitates that which immediately follows it; each following one attempts and perfects that which has preceded it." Upon this hint we may run over the scale thus: virtue, a strenuous, vigorous tone of mind for the defence of truth, is the offspring of faith; this virtue makes us active, watchful, circumspect, and so leads us to cultivate knowledge—that discerning spirit which comes from communion with Christ; this knowledge, by distinguishing evil from good, at their very source, leads to temperance or self-control; he who governs himself gains the strength of patience or endurance; he who cultivates patience will feel, as the highest motive and strength for this, his need of that reverential regard for his Maker which is true godliness; he whose heart is sanctified toward God will love his brethren; and he who has right brotherly affection will feel his charity overflowing toward all men—even to his enemies; and this love completing the circle, brings him back again to faith in the redeeming and renovating love of Christ as its own source and strength.—*J. P. Thompson, D.D.*

## 2 The necessity of their cultivation separately and collectively.

[14765] (1) That one who is wanting in these graces, and takes no pains to cultivate them, has no warrant to believe himself a Christian. (2) A full and symmetrical development of these graces is the most satisfactory evidence and the most beautiful exhibition of Christian faith. (3) The abounding of these graces in the soul will make it fruitful in the knowledge of Christ—will insure for it a progressive and productive piety.—*Ibid.*

## 3 The blessedness of their right cultivation.

[14766] The virtues and graces of the Christian character in full and symmetrical development give to their possessor the assurance of his personal call and election. This complete Christian character attained in life, assures peace and triumph in death, and a joyful entrance into eternal life.—*Ibid.*

# IX. THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.

## 1 Their nature and distinctly supernatural origin.

[14767] How unnatural, men say, they are! Yes! they are unnatural; not in the sense of contradicting nature so much as in that of transcending it. It is *not* natural to love God for His own sake, and for God's sake to love man as man; it is not natural to experience an inward sunshine which no outward troubles can overcloud, a serenity of soul which no outward provocations can really ruffle; nor in the face of continuous opposition are longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness—natural. Nature prescribes reprisals; for nature is only flesh and blood, and vehement desires, and hot passions, ordinarily controlled only by considerations of social prudence. Leaning upon nature, we may as well despair of getting beyond her as of forcing water to rise permanently above its natural level. But if we will, we may reach a higher standard, since we are not really left to our own resources. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. He does not merely prescribe, He transforms. He is perpetually asserting His presence by His spiritual transformations; He makes the feeble strong, and the melancholy bright, and the cold-blooded fervent, and the irascible gentle, and the un-instructed wise, and the conceited humble, and the timid unflinching. And now, as of old, He filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich He hath sent empty away.—*Canon Liddon.*

[14768] 1. The Spirit of God fertilizes the soil which yields these fruits. Ground which before was barren, stony, thorny, useless, is thus transformed into a spiritual harvest-field. The wilderness and the solitary place is made glad, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose. 2. The Spirit of God imparts vitality and growth to the plants by which these fruits are produced. As the showers of April and the

sunshine of May do their work in preparation for the crop of summer fruits; so the Holy Ghost accompanying the truth to the heart, and vivifying it within, the nature gives rise to goodness and virtue, and all that is pleasing to God. 3. The Spirit of God ripens and perfects the Divine fruit for the glory of God. There is a vast difference between the wild fruit of the hedgerows and the precious growth of the orchard-house and the vinery. Even so, love, joy, peace, and all the exquisite produce of the garden of God, are superior to ordinary human virtue; for they have the flavour and the fragrance of their heavenly origin.—*Anon.*

## 2 The blessedness of their possession.

(1) *Their possession alone enables us to reach the ideal of a perfect manhood.*

[14769] Here is the ideal of a perfect manhood. It must have these marks. It must be characterized by these qualities. A man may be resplendent; he may dramatize as Shakespeare; he may paint as Raphael; he may carve as Michael Angelo; he may colour as Titian; he may build as Bramante; he may subdue the material globe, and conquer by physical forces; but these things do not represent manhood. A man may think till his thoughts shoot as far as the starlight shoots; a man may speak with an eloquence which is transcendent; a man may be endowed with all conceivable intellectual endowments; but these do not represent manhood. That which distinguishes the true man is not the capacity to command physical substances. It is not the power to analyze and use things created out of material. It is not any of the lower forms of power; nor even the influence of mental strength. None of these things constitute the truest manhood. It is the fruit of the Spirit, man being the stalk on which that fruit is growing, and out of which it is to be developed.—*Ward Beecher.*

[14770] Human nature, whatever it is made up of, however you choose to classify and define it, must attain these fruits of the Spirit, under Divine guidance, if it attains them at all. And if a man's nature is fully developed, it will have these characteristic signs, signets, peculiarities. These qualities which are called "the fruit of the Spirit," are wrought out in the average man as well as in the higher orders of men. That is to say, we have not presented before us an ideal of what may be attained by certain rare spirits. Unquestionably, the larger the constitutional riches which a man receives at birth, the more ardently will he seek, and the more perfectly will he realize, the fruit of the Spirit. . . . The evidence of our relations to God and of our sonship is to be found, not in any external work, but in internal quality.—*Ibid.*

(2) *Their possession places a believer into a higher spiritual region, beyond the scope of the law.*

[14771] "Against such" who exhibit the fruit



of the Spirit "there is no law." That is to say, some men are already acting so much higher than any law requires them to act, that no law touches them. The common laws which regulate morality and conduct do not reach up as high as they are living all the time. They are doing the same things that the law enjoins, better and nobler and from unspeakably higher reasons than it requires.—*Ibid.*

## FAITH.

### I. FAITH AND ITS SYNONYMS DISCRIMINATED.

[14772] Belief (A. S., *lefan*, *lyfan*, to allow) is the acceptance of a fact or statement as true without immediate knowledge, and admits of all degrees, from suspicion to assurance. It depends upon ourselves and our judgment, and does not necessarily derive force from other persons. CREDIT (Latin, *credere*) and TRUST (German, *tröst*, consolation, hope), on the other hand, owe their force to something more than mere external evidence. I give credit to a statement because of some apparent *worthiness* of belief, either in the thing itself or in the person who communicates it. Trust represents not only the purely personal element in credit, but also a conviction of the worthiness of *things* to be relied upon; for instance, I have trusted the physician, I trust his word, and I trust his medicine. Trust, in short, is a practical reliance upon any objects grounded on a belief that it is worthy of it. FAITH is very like trust, and, in some cases, might be used for it, but it is less practical and more speculative. For instance, I have trust in God; that is, I feel myself safe in His hands, I believe He will deal with me mercifully. I have faith in God would imply this, but it would imply more, namely, that I believe it is Himself who says it. Hence, it appears that belief and credit are commonly more specific or occasional acts of the mind. Faith and trust may be mental and even moral habits.—*C. J. Smith.*

### II. THE SCRIPTURE USE OF THE TERM ITSELF.

The sacred writers attached no mystical meaning to the word faith, but used it in its ordinary acceptance.

[14773] We do not find much explanation given us in Scripture of the nature of faith. The apostles insist much on the objects of faith, the truths to be believed; they dwell also on the efficacy of faith, how that our justification and salvation are inseparably connected with it; but they give little explanation of what they meant by faith and believing. Nor do we find the first converts asking any explanation of faith, notwithstanding the supreme importance attached to it. From all this, it would appear

that the sacred writers attached no unusual, no hidden, no inexplicable, no mystical meaning to the word faith; but used it in its common and ordinary acceptance. The first disciples evidently understood it in its usual meaning; nor did the apostles ever explain that they used it in any other sense.—*Paton J. Gloag, D.D.*

[14774] Christian faith is, in no respect, different from that which is meant by the term in the ordinary use of common language with reference to the affairs of this life. They who know what is meant by faith in a promise know what is meant by faith in the gospel; they who know what is meant by faith in a remedy know what is meant by faith in the blood of the Redeemer; they who know what is meant by faith in an advocate, a physician, a friend, know too what the Scriptures mean when they speak of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.—*Bp. O'Brien.*

### III. THE USAGE OF THE WORD FAITH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

[14775] Two stages of this use may be traced. Throughout the Gospels it is used solely in its subjective sense, in that meaning of trust or reliance which the word had acquired in the Old Testament Scriptures; but in the Acts of the Apostles it gradually assumes an objective sense. Three classes of passages occur. In one class it is used with the article in contexts where it can only be understood of the act of faith in the believer; in another class of passages its objective meaning is equally clear; while in a third class of passages the word may bear either meaning; rather, perhaps, the two meanings are so combined together that it is impossible to say with certainty which of the two ideas was most prominent in the mind of the writer.—*E. Garbett.*

[14776] The passages where the word occurs in the Acts of the Apostles are so exceedingly numerous (213, with or without the article), that no object would be gained by an exhaustive classification. I therefore give instances only. The word with the article is used in a subjective meaning in Acts iii. 16, xv. 9; Rom. iii. 30, 31, iv. 11, 14; Eph. iii. 17; Col. ii. 12; and Philem. 4. It is employed with the article in an objective sense in Acts vi. 7, xiii. 8; Gal. i. 23; 1 Tim. iii. 9, v. 8, vi. 21; Titus i. 13. In the following passages it will bear, consistently with the context, either a subjective or an objective meaning, or both, viz., Acts xiv. 22, xv. 9, xvi. 5, xx. 21, xxiv. 24, xxvi. 18; Rom. i. 12; 2 Cor. i. 24; Phil. i. 17; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Tim. ii. 18, iii. 8; Titus ii. 2. The transition usage of the word appears also when it is used without the article. Its subjective use without the article needs no illustration. But it is used objectively in Eph. iv. 5, and both objectively and subjectively in 1 Tim. i. 2, 4, 19, ii. 7, 15; and Titus i. 4.—*Ibid.*

[14777] There are two styles of languages—

the Biblical and the scientific. As a precaution against fitful misunderstanding, why should we not employ both, since our personal interpretation of Biblical phrases is often not that which the mind of the inquirer makes? There is a great difference between believing and believing in. I believe Congress when it makes a public statement; but I do not believe in all the acts of Congress, nor in all its members. I believe Benedict Arnold when he writes an autobiographical sketch; but I do not believe in Benedict Arnold. I believe Washington and Lincoln when they write letters; and I also believe in Washington and Lincoln. On the one hand we have believing, and on the other believing in or on; and the Greek tongue makes even a clearer distinction between the two than the English. But when the great words are cited, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," how often, although this language is Biblical, does it fail to convey the meaning it always contains, of the necessity of affectionate self-commitment of the soul to God, or of rejoicing personal loyalty to Him as both Saviour and Lord? Coleridge said, "I believe Plato and Aristotle: I believe in Jesus Christ." To believe in a person implies admiration of that person's character, and naturally results in confidence, gladness, pride, and alacrity in following his lead.—*J. Cook.*

[14778] If you believe in God in Christ, you accept Him loyally as Prophet, Priest, and King, or as both Saviour and Lord, and you are learning to love what He loves, and to hate what He hates; and the nature of things will no longer be against you. But until you not only believe, but believe on and believe in, and thus affectionately choose, God as both Saviour and Lord, of course there is no safety for you, for there cannot be any similarity of feeling between you and God. When you come to believe in Him, that means that you love Him, and that you are ready to obey Him, not slavishly, but with delight. I believe in Lincoln; I believe in Washington; and therefore I am ready to have them for my guides, I am proud and glad to follow whithersoever they lead. If we are to be Christians in a similar sense, we are to believe in God not only as Lord, but also as Saviour.—*Ibid.*

#### IV. EXPOSITION AND ILLUSTRATION OF THE DESCRIPTION OF "FAITH" IN HEB. XI.

[14779] "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This definition involves three general truths. First: That the things toward which faith is directed are invisible. "Things not seen." There are two classes of invisible realities: (1) Those that are essentially invisible—such as thought, mind, God. (2) Such as are contingently invisible. There are seeable things that are invisible to us now, but may be seen hereafter: faith has to do with the invisible. Secondly: That some of the invisible things are at once desirable and attainable—"things

hoped for." Hope always implies these two things—the desirable and attainable. We never hope for the undesirable nor for that which lies absolutely beyond our reach. There are then invisible things with which faith has to do that are both desirable and attainable, such as the society of holy souls, the presence of the blessed Christ, fellowship with the Infinite Father, &c. Thirdly: That those invisible things which are desirable and attainable faith makes powerful in the present life. It is the "substance of things hoped for." Faith is the realization of things hoped and the demonstration of things not seen.—*Homist.*

[14780] Faith is accepting the unseen as if it were plainer than the seen, and adapting one's self to the phenomena which are undiscerned by the lower senses, but are discerned by the reason. There is no opposition between faith and reason; and the idea that the act of faith is a single act is just as mistaken as the idea that reason and faith are different from each other, and opposed to each other. People ask, "What is faith?" What is it not? The scope of it is as great as the scope of the human reason. The act of the mind in discerning invisible things is as variable as the whole range of unseen truths. Noah was moved by fear when God told him that the flood was coming, and he built the ark. It was faith of an invisible thing that was going to take place which inspired fear in him. It was belief in an invisible fact. In another case faith works by hope—for it is said to be the "substance of things hoped for." In another case faith works by love. But there is a faith that works by hatred, and there is a faith that works by horror or remorse, as well as a faith that works by love, by hope, or by fear. There are as many ways in which faith works as there are possible variations in the emotions of the human soul. Faith then, is not simply one thing. It describes the potentiality of the soul acting in a higher realm in all the variousness and range of its simple or combined action.—*Ward Beecher.*

[14781] In its largest distinction faith is that condition or state of mind which accepts non-material truth with all its natural tendencies, just as our lower senses accept physical truth with all its natural tendencies. It is that action or condition of the mind by which it accepts for truth things that are not true to the ear, nor to the nose, nor to the mouth, nor to the hand. They are true to the thought; they are true to the imagination; they are true to the ærated emotions of the soul; but they are not true to the lower nature. That state of mind which recognizes truths that are supersensuous is in its largest estate faith.—*Ibid.*

[14782] Faith is that by which we take cognition of things through hope or imagination; but in neither case are they present. They are beyond and above. It is the state of mind which is produced when the substance of things hoped for is as if it were physically present. It is that

mental condition which is produced when the evidence of the invisible has wrought, just as the evidence of visible things works, its effect upon the mind. To invest it in plain language, unvetted by technics, faith may be said to be reason acting under the inspiration of our higher moral nature as distinguished from reason acting under the inspiration of the physical and animal nature. It describes, therefore, a higher realm of the action of reason as distinguished from its lower or material realm.—*Ibid.*

#### V. IMPORTANCE OF THIS PRINCIPLE OF ACTION APART FROM RELIGION.

- 1 It is the backbone of the social, and the foundation of the commercial fabric.

[14783] All humane actions have an order and reference to some end, and consequently suppose some knowledge of the end, and of the means whereby it may be attained. So that unless a man do believe and be persuaded that such a thing is some way or other good for him, and consequently desirable and fit to be propounded as an end, and that this end is attainable, and the means which he useth are probable and likely for the attaining of this end, he will sit still and do nothing at all about it. So that without faith it is impossible to do anything; he that believes nothing will do nothing. To instance first in civil actions, and the common affairs and concerns of life; all these are done by virtue of some faith or persuasion concerning them. For example, husbandry, or merchandise; no man will apply himself to these but upon some belief or persuasion of the possibility and necessity, or at least usefulness and convenience of these to the ends of life. No man would plough or sow, if he did not believe that there were such a thing as the growing of corn, and that it is necessary for the support of our lives, and if he were not persuaded of the probability of reaping some fruit and benefit of his pains and industry. No man would traffic to Turkey or the Indies, if he did not believe there were such places, and that they afforded such commodities, and that he might have them upon such terms as might recompense the adventure of his charge and pains. And so in all other actions of life.—*Abp. Tillotson*.

[14784] Faith, which is the source of so much human happiness, is the mainspring of human activity. It moves more than half the machinery of life. What leads the husbandman, for example, to yoke his horses when, no bud bursting to clothe the naked trees, no bird singing in hedgerows or frosty skies, nature seems dead? With faith in the regularity of her laws, in the ordinance of her God, he believes that she is not dead but sleepeth; and so he ploughs and sows in the certain expectation that he shall reap, and that these bare fields shall be green in summer with waving corn, and be merry in autumn with sun-browned reapers. The farmer

is a man of faith. So is the seaman. No braver man than he who goes down to see God's wonders in the deep. Venturing his frail bark on a sea ploughed by many keels, but wearing on its bosom the furrows of none, with neither path to follow nor star to guide, the master knows no fear. When the last blue hill has dipped beneath the wave, and he is alone on a shoreless sea, he is calm and confident—his faith in the compass-needle, which, however his ship may turn, or roll, or plunge, ever points true to the north. An example is to be followed by the Christian with his Bible, on that faith venturing his all, life, crew, and cargo, he steers his way boldly through darkest nights and stormiest oceans, with nothing but a thin plank between him and the grave. And though metaphysicians and divines have involved this matter of faith in mystery, be assured that there is nothing more needed for your salvation or mine than that God would inspire us with a belief in the declarations of His word as real, heartfelt, and practical, as that which we put in the laws of providence—in the due return of day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest.—*Guthrie*

[14785] Remove faith between man and man, and society and commerce fall to pieces. There is not a happy home on earth but stands on faith; our heads are pillowed on it; we sleep at night in its arms with greater security for the safety of our lives, peace, and property, than bolts and bars can give.—*Ibid.*

[14786] Strike from mankind the principle of faith, and men would have no more history than a flock of sheep.—*Lord Lytton*.

[N.B.—With this may Virgil's melancholy exclamation be compared—

“Nowhere is there faith on earth.”

—*C. N.*]

- 2 It is necessary for the advancement of knowledge in all its departments.

[14787] The first principles of any science are not found by art and study, but are taken on faith as necessarily true, and so faith receives the weightier truths of religion as first realities, which no demonstration can make clearer. The witness of the mind and the witness of the thing agree. No one learns in science or religion without faith; he cannot learn without this, as a forefeeling of something to be known, and that something of a primal unvarying truth.—*Hooker*.

[14788] An evidence that the world in temporal affairs pays great respect to, however shy they are of admitting it for a principle of religion: for there is no man but who believes a great deal more concerning this world, and the affairs of it, on the report made from other people's senses, than he does from his own. It is a narrow sphere that a man acts in, and his



senses go but a very little farther than he himself goes: and a man's knowledge would be extremely confined, were he to know and believe nothing but what he saw and heard himself. Now there are things in this world which all people believe to be in the world, and yet not one in ten thousand ever saw them. What evidence do they believe on then? not on the evidence of sense; for these things never fell under their senses; but they believe on the report and credit of others, that is, on the evidence of faith.—*Bp. Sherlock.*

### 3 It is the secret of the poet's far-sightedness.

[14789] It is by faith that poetry, as well as devotion, soars above this dull earth; that imagination breaks through its clouds, breathes a purer air, and lives in a softer light.—*H. Giles.*

### VI. VARIOUS DEFINITIONS OF FAITH IN REGARD TO SPIRITUAL AND GOSPEL TRUTH.

[14790] Although belief has its deep, philosophical, speculative, and theoretical roots far below the surface, yet it is in itself one of the most ordinary, simple, and natural acts or habits of the mind. To believe, we must have the power, or faculty, or principle with which to believe. To exercise this power of belief, we require to have presented to our mind objects of a certain class, namely, those truths which are received upon the testimony borne to them by a testifier. The act, itself, of belief in the truths thus presented, admits of degrees and stages, dependent both on the value of the testimony given, and on the way in which we allow that value to weigh with us. Again, the value of the testimony depends on the authority of the testifier; in other words, on the amount (or more strictly speaking, on the estimate we place on the amount) of his truthfulness. The estimate, moreover, we place upon the authority of the testifier and the regard we pay to his testimony rests upon an infinite variety of reasons, beside and beyond those which have regard to questions as to the weight of the evidence itself. And finally belief—until it ripens into a full surrender to the truths presented as fitting objects of credence and trust, so that they exercise a tangible and real power over our thoughts, feelings, and life—has failed in its higher, truer, and more important offices. In regard to spiritual truths, this better kind of belief is alone worthy of the name of a living, justifying, purifying, conquering, saving faith.—*C. N.*

[14791] Faith is the vision of, and trust in, the Invisible, amid a world of delusive appearances. I say vision *and* trust, because one cannot be without the other. It is at once the eye of the spirit, by which it gazes on a world which to men without spiritual faith is only a dream, and the emotion of the heart, by which it believes in that spiritual world as *the* reality;

while to unspiritual men the visible appearances of life are alone real.—*Rev. E. L. Hull, B.A.*

[14792] Faith, which is the vision of the soul, implies three things—intellectual knowledge of the truth, an emotion produced by the truth, and a cordial reception of the truth; or, in simpler words, knowledge, belief, trust.—*Rev. Hugh Macmillan.*

[14793] Christian faith is the faith of a transaction. It is not the committing of one's thought in assent to any proposition, but the trusting of one's being to a Being, there to be rested, kept, guided, moulded, governed, and possessed for ever.—*Rev. H. Bushnell, D.D.*

[14794] Faith, in the full range of its Pauline meaning, is both a single act and a progressive principle. As a single act it is the self-surrender of the soul to God, the laying hold of Christ, the sole means whereby we appropriate this reconciling love, in which point of view it may be regarded as the root of the new relation of man to God in justification and adoption. As a progressive principle, it is the renewal of the personal life in sanctification—a preservation of the "righteousness of God" objectively bestowed upon us in the inward and ever-deepening righteousness of our own life; it is, in fact, a new and spiritual life, lived in the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.—*Archdeacon Farrar.*

[14795] Faith is (1) A conviction of the intellect that God, or God in Christ, is, and (2) An affectionate choice of the heart that God, or God in Christ, should be, both our Saviour and our Lord. The first half of this definition is belief; the whole is faith. All of it without the last two words would be merely religiosity, and not religion. There is nothing in that definition which teaches that a man is saved by opinion irrespective of character. Belief is assent, faith is consent, to God as both Saviour and Lord. On April 19, 1775, a rider on a horse flecked with blood and foam brought to the city of Worcester the news of the battle of Lexington, in which Theodore Parker's grandfather captured the first British gun. The horse fell dead in the main street of the city, and on another steed the rider passed westward with his news. Some of those who heard the intelligence were loyal, and some disloyal. They all heard that there had been a victory of the American troops over the British, and they all believed the report. Now, was there any political virtue or vice in the belief by the Tory in Worcester that there had been a victory over the British? Was there any political virtue or vice in the belief by the patriot yonder that there had been a victory over the British? Neither the one nor the other. Where, then, did the political virtue or political vice come in? Why, when your Tory at Worcester heard of the victory, he believed the report, and was sorry; and was so sorry, that he took up arms

against his own people. When the patriot heard the report, he believed it and was glad; and was so glad, that he took up arms and put himself side by side with the stalwart shoulders of Parker's grandfather. In that attitude of the heart lay the political virtue or political vice. Just so, in the government of the universe, we all hear that God is our Saviour and Lord, and we all believe this, and so do all the devils, and tremble. Is there any virtue or vice in that belief taken alone? None whatever. But some of us believe this, and are sorry. Only when we accept God [or rather, Christ, or God's Christ] as both Saviour and Lord, are we loyal; only when we are affectionately glad to take Him as both, are we, or can we be, at peace. When we believe the news that He is Saviour and Lord, and are glad, and so glad as to face the foe, we are in safety.—*J. Cook.*

[There seems a slight want of clearness of Catholic views respecting the Trinity in this otherwise admirable description.—*C. N.*]

[14796] Faith is a life of feeling, a life of the soul, in God (if we understand by soul the basis of personal life, wherein, through very fullness, all emotion is still vague); and no one is a believer who has not felt himself to be in God and God in him. Faith knows what it believes, and in the light of its intuition it views the sacred truths in the midst of the agitations and turmoil of this world's life; and though its knowledge is not a comprehensive knowledge, although its intuition is not a seeing face to face, although in clearness it is inferior to these forms of apprehension, yet in certitude it yields to neither; for the very essence of faith is, that it is firm, confident certitude respecting what is not seen. Faith, finally, is the profoundest act of the will, the profoundest act of obedience and devotion. *Nemo credit nisi volens*; therefore, faith necessarily passes over into action; partly into definite acts of worship (sacrifice, prayer, sacrament), partly into actions belonging to the sphere of morality, which thus receives a religious impress.—*Martensen.*

[14797] What is wanted in the case of Christ, and what also is justified and even required by the facts of His life, is a faith that goes beyond the mere evidence of propositions, or propositional verities about Christ—viz., the faith of a transaction; and this faith is Christian faith. It is the act of trust by which one being, a sinner, commits himself to another being, a Saviour. It is not mind dealing with notions, or notional truths. It is what cannot be a proposition at all. But it is being trusting itself to being, and so becoming other and different, by a relation wholly transactional.—*Rev. H. Bushnell, D.D.*

[14798] If a man comes to a banker with a letter of credit from some other banker, that letter may be read and seen to be a real letter. The signature also may be approved, and the credit of the drawing party honoured by the

other, as being wholly reliable. So far what is done is merely opinionative or notional, and there is no transactional faith. And yet there is a good preparation for this; just that is done which makes it intelligent. When the receiving party, therefore, accepts the letter, and intrusts himself actually to the drawing party in so much money, there is the real act of faith, an act which answers to the operative, or transactional faith of a disciple. Another, and perhaps better, illustration may be taken from the patient or sick person as related to his physician. He sends for a physician, just because he has been led to have a certain favourable opinion of his faithfulness and capacity. But the suffering him to feel his pulse, investigate his symptoms, and tell the diagnosis of his disease, imports nothing. It is only the committing of his being and life to this other being, consenting to receive and take his medicines, that imports a real faith, the faith of a transaction. In the same manner Christian faith is the faith of a transaction.—*Ibid.*

#### VII. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED A HUMAN AND A DIVINE FAITH.

[14799] In so far as the evidence is common to revealed religion and other branches of our natural knowledge, it is strictly analogous to those historical proofs on which a large portion of that knowledge is based; and that in so far as it is peculiar to revealed religion, it is strictly analogous to those Divine manifestations on which the evidence of natural religion depends. Divines usually draw a distinction between what has been called a human faith and a Divine faith. By a human faith they mean a belief resting on human testimony or authority; by a Divine faith, a belief resting on a higher testimony—the witness of God Himself. The distinction is generally applied only to Christian belief; but it is really applicable with reference both to natural and revealed religion. A man may have a mere human faith in the first article of natural religion, when he believes in the existence of God merely because that truth has been instilled into his mind by parental instruction and the testimony or tradition of his fellow-men—but without reflecting upon it, or seeing in nature the Divine evidence by which God bears witness to Himself as the Creator and Governor of the world. In like manner, he may have a mere human faith in revealed religion, resting on the testimony of man, and not on the authority of God.—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

[14800] If the beginning of our faith were from ourselves, then the beginning of our salvation would be from ourselves, not from God. If our belief were the simple result of our own reasoning powers; if it depended upon nothing more than acquiescing in certain things as true, which we could not help seeing to be true, when

they were set before us ; if the belief that God has revealed Himself to mankind, and has in that revelation taught the truths which He *has* taught, depended upon nothing more than that we could see clearly with our natural understanding the process of proof upon which it rested, then our faith would be a human, not a Divine faith.—*Dr. Pusey.*

#### VIII. THE NATURE OF (SAVING) FAITH, NEGATIVELY CONSIDERED.

##### 1 Not mere assent to the truths and doctrines set forth in Scripture, or the Creed and Articles of Faith.

[14801] The absence of truth is frequently assumed to be the possession of faith. Non-contradiction of truth is taken for the same as actual perception and acceptance.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[14802] Christian faith, while it implies a belief of revealed truth, is not a mere intellectual assent to the articles of any creed, such as might be yielded to them by a hard, dry, dead orthodoxy ; but a spiritual grace—a vital principle—a moral virtue—one of the gifts of God, and of the “fruits of His Spirit,”—the germ of the “new creation”—the prolific root of “new obedience.” It includes the belief of the truth, but it presupposes a spiritual apprehension of it in its real Scriptural meaning, and a heartfelt relish for it in its heavenly savour, as the very truth of God. It consists, not only in believing that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God,” but in “receiving and resting upon Him alone for salvation, as He is freely offered to us in the Gospel.” It involves both the assent of the understanding, and the consent of the heart, to the revealed method of God’s redeeming mercy. It is not a bare and barren intellectual belief, but a vital and operative principle, which “worketh by love,” and “purifieth the heart,” and “overcometh the world.” It is the product not of mere rational arguments, nor even of Scriptural truths, but of both carried home to the heart in “demonstration of the Spirit, and with power.” There must be a subjective work of grace, in opening the blind eyes, and making the light to shine into the heart, as well as an objective presentation of truth, in order to the production of true, spiritual, saving faith. This is unquestionably the doctrine of Scripture ; and it is confirmed by the experience of every believer, who will be ready on a review of his past, as compared with his present, experience to say, “One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.”—*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

[14803] The rain and the dewdrops, which have neither taste nor odour, may be said to form the basis of those sweet aromatic juices which Eastern flowers distil under the warm action of a tropical sun. But as these juices, so rich in their flavour, and in their aroma so fragrant, differ from the inodorous and insipid

raindrops, so does faith differ from mere belief. For faith is *love* mingling with belief, at the sight of an object who is altogether lovely ; and faith is *gratitude* mingling with belief, at the sight of an object who has done so much, even to the laying down of His life for us ; and faith is *desire* mingling with belief, at the sight of an object who in all respects is so desirable ; and faith is *trust* mingling with belief, at the sight of an object who has given such proofs of His trustworthiness ; and faith is *wonder* mingling with belief, for the soul is lost in amazement to hear Christ say, Come unto Me, thou who didst pierce Me : come to this bosom which thou didst cause to bleed, and I will shelter and caress thee there ; and faith is *sorrow* mingling with belief, when through gushing tears, the witnesses of its contrition, the soul looks on Him whom it has pierced ; and faith is *hope* mingling with belief, for if this Saviour, so beneficent and so trustworthy, is ours, then what is there we may not hope for ? and faith is *complacency* mingling with belief, for now having found Christ Himself, the soul has found all its salvation and all its desire.—*W. Trail.*

##### 2 Not mere sentiment, opinion, or conviction.

[14804] The second sort is a temporary faith, and (as I may so call it) a faith of conviction. Such a one as by the present convincing force of the Word is wrought in the heart, and for a time raises and carries out the soul to some short sallies and attempts in the course of godliness ; nevertheless having no firm fixation in the heart, but being only like the short and sudden issue of a forced growth, it quickly faints and sinks, and comes to nothing, leaving the soul many leagues short of a true and thorough change of its estate.—*R. South.*

##### 3 Not assurance.

[14805] Though faith is the *substratum* of assurance, the two are distinct in idea, and to confound them disarranges and hopelessly confuses all practical Christian teaching.—*C. A.*

#### IX. THE NATURE OF (SAVING) FAITH, POSITIVELY CONSIDERED.

##### 1 Faith lies in consent, personal, deliberate, full, and entire.

[14806] The very sure and lively Christian faith is not only to believe all things of God which are contained in Holy Scripture, but also in earnest trust and confidence in God, that He doth regard us, and hath care of us, as the father of the child whom he doth love, and that He will be merciful unto us for His only Son’s sake, and that we have our Saviour Christ our perpetual advocate and priest, in whose only merits, oblation, and suffering, we do trust that our offences be continually washed and purged, whensoever we, repenting truly, do return to Him with our whole heart, steadfastly determining with ourselves, through His grace, to



obey and serve Him in keeping His commandments, and never to turn back again to sin.—*Abp. Cranmer.*

[14807] Faith, whether in God or man, is an implicit, full, unswerving reliance in the being who is the object of faith. If it is not absolute or perfect, it is not faith. It may be, as to man, circumscribed in its extent, but, within that compass, it must be absolute. If in matters of affection we trust husband or wife or child; if in matters of commercial honesty we trust those with whom we have dealings of trade; if in matters of public faith we trust the honesty of politicians or political enemies; if in matters of science we receive conclusions unproved to us, but which have been (as the universal belief informs us on the knowledge of those whom we trust) demonstrated to others—one single flaw destroys the whole faith.—*Dr. Pusey.*

2 Faith lies in affiance, recumbency, dependence, reliance upon God's promises for time and eternity.

[14808] Faith is not sense, not sight, not reason, but a taking God at His word—believing that Jesus is enough for all the emergencies of His people's wants.—*J. H. Evans.*

[14809] Faith is the soul riding at anchor.—*H. W. Shaw.*

[14810] Faith is letting down our nets into the transparent deeps, at the Divine command, not knowing what we shall take.—*F. W. Faber.*

[14811] We must regard the conviction that the faith which saves does not consist in the adoption of a series of *articuli fidei fundamentales primarii*, but in an absolute and truthful surrender of one's self to the personal Saviour; a surrender of which the simplest child is capable. Although this conviction may in the next few years have to sustain violent attacks and be branded as heresy—the attacks have, indeed, already begun—yet it is so deeply rooted in the Divine word and in the fundamental religious sentiment of the Reformers, that we cannot but have confidence in its final triumph.—*Julius Müller.*

[14812] Faith in Christ is, in general, committing our souls to Him for salvation in His appointed way; or more largely, such a persuasion that He is the Messiah, and such a desire and expectation of the blessings which He has in His gospel promised to His people, as engages the soul to fix its dependence upon Him, and subject itself to Him in all the ways of holy obedience.

[14813] Justifying faith is such a belief of the gospel by the power of the Spirit of God, as leads us to come to Christ, to receive Christ, to trust in Christ, to commit the keeping of our souls into His hands in humble confidence of His ability and His willingness to save us.—*Dr. Bunting.*

[14814] Faith is man's trustful acceptance of God's gift, rising to absolute self-surrender, culminating in personal union with Christ, working within him as a spirit of new life.—*Archdeacon Farrar.*

[14815] Faith is indeed the soul's venture for eternity. Something it is to venture on as to its eternal condition. It must either adhere unto itself or its own vain hopes of a righteousness of its own; or it must give over all expectation and lie down in darkness; or it must shut out all dreadful apprehensions of eternity, by the power and activity of its lusts and carnal affections; or it must, whatever its discouragements be, cast itself upon pardon in the blood of Jesus Christ. Now, if all the former ways be detestable and pernicious, if the best of them be a direct opposition unto the gospel, what hath the soul that inquires after these things to do but to adhere unto the last, and to improve every encouragement, even the least to that purpose?—*J. Owen.*

[14816] When a miner looks at the rope that is to lower him into the deep mine, he may coolly say, "I have faith *in* that rope as well made and strong." But when he lays hold of it, and swings down by it into the tremendous chasm, then he is believing *on* the rope. Then he is trusting himself to the rope. It is not a mere opinion—it is an act. The miner lets go of everything else, and bears his whole weight on those well-braided strands of hemp. Now that is faith.—*T. L. Cuyler.*

## X. THE NECESSITY OF FAITH.

1 Because it is commanded and required by God.

[14817] Men seek to soothe our very natural alarm by drawing a distinction between doctrines and duties, saying that if our life and practice are good, it is a small matter what we believe. True, and so if the stream is pure, it is a small matter that the fountain is polluted; if the fruit is good, that the tree is bad; if the vessel is rightly steered, that both compass and chart are wrong. But who ever heard of such things? Who has gathered grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? How can a man's conduct be right if his creed be wrong—wrong, not in its accidents, but in its essence and substance? The Spartans thought theft no crime if secretly committed; and so, that being their belief, they stole. David Hume thought the same of adultery; and so, that being his belief, what hindered him, or now hinders his followers, from such a crime? The Hindu widow thinks it meritorious to give herself to the flames which consume the body of her husband. There are too many who set much value on an orthodox creed, and little on a holy, or even moral life; who talk much of faith, but are not careful to maintain good works. What does their case prove against the importance of sound views on such high subjects as faith, salvation by grace, and redemption

through the blood of Christ? It only shows that men may sin against light and conscience—no new thing, nor peculiar to Christian ages, since an old heathen has said, “I see the better, and approve; yet follow the worse.”—*Guthrie*.

**2 Because it is the essential qualification for communion with God.**

[14818] If a man come to the market and cheapen such things as he hath need of, and yet will not go to the price of them, he must return without them; even so, seeing we hear at what price God hath set life and salvation, that they are not to be purchased but at the price of faith and repentance, and that God will not let them go at a lower rate, let us resolve that they will not be gotten otherwise, so that if we mean not to come to the price, or cannot come unto faith and repentance, we must be content to go home again without life and salvation.—*J. Smith*.

[14819] Faith that trusts *on* Jesus alone for salvation, and not on your respectable life, and the obedience that follows Him, are the indispensable steps to salvation. You admit that you have not taken these decisive steps. Then, however *near* you are, you are not *in* Christ.—*T. L. Cuyler*.

**3 Because it is the appointed instrument of salvation.**

[14820] He hath appointed this grace to be justifying, and He doth it because faith is a grace that takes a man off himself, and gives all the honour to Christ and free grace (Rom. iv. 20). “Strong in faith, giving glory to God.” Therefore God hath put this honour on faith, to make it saving and justifying. The king’s stamp makes the coin pass for current; if he would put his stamp upon leather, as well as silver, it would make it current. So God, having put His sanction, the stamp of His authority and institution upon faith, this makes it to be justifying and saving.—*J. Watson*.

[14821] There are many other excellencies that we are capable of, many moral virtues, such as Aristotle and Socrates have described, but without faith God regards none of these: take one that is a wicked man, and take another, let him be never so virtuous, as Socrates and Seneca, that were the strictest in morality of all the heathen; nay, take any man that lives in the Church, that lives the most strict and exact life, and yet is not justified by faith, God makes no difference between these men; the one is as near to heaven as the other, God looks upon them both with the same eye; for He regards nothing without faith. He that is the most profane and ungodly, if he come with faith, he shall obtain Christ; the other that hath all moral virtues in the most exact manner, without faith, they shall do him no good: therefore we are to seek for nothing in the matter of justification, but how we may be enabled to believe, we are principally to study this matter of faith.—*J. Preston*.

[14822] Faith is propounded by Christianity as the one effectual remedy for the moral and spiritual diseases of man. Its teachers would say to every man, as the necessary condition of his elevation: Believe in truth, be persuaded of its reality; increase in faith; be strengthened in your inner man by Christ’s dwelling in your heart by faith. To the degraded their teaching is, Believe, and you shall be rescued from your degradation. To the man destitute of moral self-control, Contemplate the truths which are set before you, until they produce in you deep conviction; and you will acquire the spiritual power which will enable you to grapple with temptation. To the man ready to sink under suffering, Contemplate Jesus Christ, believe in things to come; and a Divine strength will be imparted to you. To the man earnestly desiring to attain to higher degrees of holiness, Grow in faith, and you will increase in every Christian virtue. In one word, the spiritual medicine for the unholy, and the power of spiritual life to the holy, is faith in God, faith in His promises, faith in Christ, faith in truth.—*C. A. Row*.

**4 Because it is the channel for communicating God’s blessing.**

[14823] Here is a man who has been cutting a seal and making your crest, but when you come to stamp your letters with it, you find that the impression is very bad, that it is not your crest at all. You cannot make out what it is. It may be a griffin, but it is not at all like one. Well, what will you do? Will you try to polish up your wax, and so make the impression like what you wanted it to be? Would it not be a great deal wiser if you were to get the seal altered? Would not that set it all right directly? If you were to send the seal back to the man who cut the die, and get him to make the seal properly, would not the stamp then be right? Now, how do we get likeness to Christ? Why, it is faith which puts the stamp there, and instead of saying, “The impression upon my character is not like Christ, therefore I must try to alter it,” my dear friend, think about your faith; go to Christ, and through Him get your faith altered; and when the stamp is set to rights, then the impression will be perfect. There is no holiness, no true holiness, apart from faith.—*C. H. Spurgeon*.

**XI. ITS COMPASS AND VIRTUE.**

[14824] When we come to consider what faith actually was in the consciousness of the early believers, we are able to discover more clearly its nature. It has established a very intimate and wonderful union between each believer and his unseen Lord and Saviour. It is the door into a spiritual sphere, of which Christ is so wholly the prevailing Presence that they are said to be “in Jesus Christ.” And when we examine the compass and virtue of this faith more narrowly, we see these four elements distinctly named as conditioned upon it. Firstly, the early believers hold themselves under the

[14824-14831]

authority of Jesus Christ, and deem themselves to enjoy His personal direction and guardianship. Secondly, they consider that in Jesus Christ they have entered a new relationship with God the Father; they are saved by grace; their sins are forgiven; they are "accepted of God in Christ." Thirdly, they feel themselves to possess a new spiritual life in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has come down on them. This is to them a Spirit of love, of power, and of a sound mind. Courage, moral energy, and freedom, and great joy are theirs in the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of Christ. And lastly, in Jesus Christ, and through the messengers appointed by Him, they receive revelations concerning their salvation, the person and work of their Redeemer, and the glory of His kingdom, which they are enabled to apprehend by the illumination of the Spirit of promise. These various elements, which form the new spiritual consciousness of all these believers, may be said to be blessings following after faith; but still they are conditioned upon it. It is their faith in Jesus Christ which has immediately opened their soul to this new world of spiritual life, and given them its possession. The faith of the believer is given distinctly and consciously to Christ with regard to each spiritual privilege or blessing he enjoys. It is drawn from Him, but it is received by faith, and according to the measure of faith.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

## XII. ITS SOURCE.

[14825] When I affirm faith to be the gift of God, it agreeth with Scripture (Eph. ii. 8). Faith is the gift of God; which is to teach, that men have it not by industry, as they have arts and sciences; nor by nature, as they have reason, memory, speech.—*T. Watson.*

[14826] It is not the work of man's hand, or of his head, or of his heart. It is something without him, not in him naturally; something above him, out of the reach of nature. It must be reached down by the hand of God, otherwise man can never come by it.—*Clarkson.*

[14827] Our Saviour says, "No man can come unto Him unless he be drawn of God;" and yet He says, "He that is of God will hear His word;" and in another place, "If any man is willing to do the will of God, he shall know of His doctrine;" and if so, then to be willing to do the will of God must amount to the same thing with being of God, and being drawn by God. From whence it follows that those who are willing to do His will, that is, disposed to receive His truth, are drawn by Him; that is, all who are well disposed to receive the faith of Christ, owe their disposition to the grace and influence of God's Holy Spirit. Accordingly we read of Lydia, that "God opened her heart to attend unto the things which were spoken of Paul;" where opening her heart can signify nothing but inclining her will to attend to and examine the truths of the gospel, which were

the things spoken by Paul. And as faith is ascribed to this disposition wrought by the Spirit of God, so the want of faith is ascribed to the contrary disposition, where a man is under the power of lust and appetite, and possessed with the love of this world and the pleasures of it: "If our gospel be hid," says St. Paul, "it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.—*Bp. Sherlock.*

[14828] Faith, from first to last, is the gift of God to the soul which will receive it. God prepares the soul, with its will, not without it, to receive the faith. God stills the soul, that it may listen to the faith; God flashes conviction into the soul, that it may see the truth of the faith; in those who through His grace persevere to the end, God seals up the faith in the soul, that it may keep the faith which it has received, unchanged, undiminished, unadulterated; the source of light and love and holiness, until faith is swallowed up in the blessed-making sight of Him whom, unseen, it believed.—*Dr. Pusey.*

[14829] Who that knows his own mind can doubt that the Divine agency is needed to convince the sinner of his sin, to inspire a real desire for deliverance, and prompt the repentant cry, "What must I do to be saved?"—and then to extinguish all self-dependence; to repress all self-righteous strivings, and effectually to teach that in confidence and quietness is our strength; to tranquillize the fears of the awakened sinner by the efficacy of the atoning work of the Saviour; and, what is harder still, to cleanse his conscience and silence its reproaches by the sufficiency of the same stupendous offering for sin? All this must be done before the heart can feel that confidence in God through Christ which is an essential part of saving faith. And to effect this change in all the natural feelings of the heart will, assuredly, by all who know the heart, be easily admitted to be the work, not of man's might or power, but of the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts.—*Bp. O'Brien.*

[14830] True faith has no foundation, when given, but the Word of God; nothing to rest on but the Divine truth, no support but the Divine power, and no growth but from the Divine influence.—*Romaine.*

[14831] No one who believes the gospel can doubt that faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is a gift of God, wrought in the soul by God the Holy Ghost. "By grace ye are saved through faith, and this not of yourselves;" faith, too, is not of yourselves; "it," faith too, "is the gift of God." And not that living faith only, whereby a man cleaves to Christ in love, but every beginning of, feeling after, drawing towards, tendency to faith, is equally the gift of God.—*Dr. Pusey.*



## XIII. ITS OBJECTS.

## 1 The meaning of the term "object of faith."

[14832] The object of faith is that which is presented to the mind, in order, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, to call forth this grace into existence.—*P. Strutt.*

## 2 The necessity of having a right object of faith.

[14833] It has been said (by Cardinal Manning) that in certain cases "the conscience, subdued and held in subjection, exercises true virtues upon a false object, and renders to a human authority the submissive trust which is due only to the Divine voice." It has also been said (this time by Miss Martineau) that, so long as there is faith, it does not so much matter what is believed, and that "all genuine faith is—other circumstances being the same—of about equal value. The value is in the act of faith more than in the object." This seems very much like saying that poison will serve very well as a substitute for wholesome food, if only the processes of mastication and of assimilation are rightly performed; or that there may be a true worship of a false God, or that a true science may be constructed out of false facts.—*Ibid.*

## 3 The chief objects of a Christian faith.

(1) *The revealed testimony concerning God.*

[14834] The human mind is so mutable, that no individual can fix a standard of his own faith, much less can he commission another to establish one for him and his posterity.—*Percival.*

[14835] He who believes only what he sees, and does only what his understanding pronounces to be reasonable in each particular command of God, has evidently no faith. One who on a dark night at sea fancies he sees land before him, while gazing on a fog bank, should at least not pretend to have as much faith in the pilot as one who believes on the pilot's word that the land is near, and does not pretend to see it. For "faith is the evidence of things not seen."—*Abp. Whately.*

(2) *The person of Christ as the centre and foundation of all covenant blessings.*

[14836] Justifying faith hath Christ her object. First, if it be taken for assent, which we call belief, or credence, Christ may worthily be accounted the object thereof, for this is the truth whereto she assenteth, namely, that Christ is hers. If it be taken the second way for confidence, so also is Christ the object of faith, for in the merits of Christ only, and nought else, can we safely repose any trust; of Him may we depend only for our salvation.—*D. Dyke.*

[14837] The object of faith is not merely the Christ of history, so to speak, but Jesus, as He was when on earth, and as He is now in heaven—Jesus, once dead, but now alive—Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—Jesus, the Christ of prophecy, the Christ of history, the Christ of heaven—not three, but one. With what

emphasis and reiteration does Paul dwell on this important aspect of the object of saving faith! Why does the apostle (in 2 Cor. v. 14, 15) close up his argument with the idea of a risen Saviour? Is it not because faith has to do, not with a dead, but with a living Christ? He *is* alive. He died for us, but *rose again*. We may, therefore, live to Him—can tell Himself, what we owe to Him; instead of sorrow for the dead we can yield service to the living. Ah! how dead a thing faith were, if it had to lie in the cold embrace of a buried Christ! But united as it is to a risen Jesus, it is alive; for it lives with His life; in Him and for Him it lives.—*W. Trail.*

[14838] Scripture declares of faith, that it unites us to Christ; or that when we believe in Him, we are made one with Him, we in Him, and He in us. But could this be the case if faith were mere belief, or if its object were so many doctrines or declarations, and mysterious oneness which unites the Triune Godhead itself? "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." And what cements a union so mysteriously close as this? If the Divine Son were not a person, could the Father thus be in Him? Would the heart of God so embrace and twine round a naked abstraction? And why does my heart by faith embrace and cling, but because it finds a *person* whom it can embrace, and to whom it can cling?—*Ibid.*

[14839] The characteristics and attributes of Christ are known to us only by doctrinal propositions and by biographical statements. These must be understood in some measure, and accepted, ere there can be faith in Him. Apart from them the image of Christ must stand a pale colourless phantom before the mind, and the faith which is directed towards such a nebula will be an unintelligent emotion, as nebulous and impotent as the shadow towards which it turns. Thus far, then, the attempt which is sometimes made to establish a Christianity without doctrines on the plea that the object of faith is not a proposition, but a person, must be regarded as nugatory; for how can the "person" be an object of thought at all, but through the despised "propositions"? But while, on the one hand, it is true that Christ as revealed in these doctrinal statements of Scripture, the Divine human Saviour, is the object of faith, on the other hand it is to be remembered that it is He, and not the statements about Him, who is the object. Look at His own words. He does not merely say to us, Believe this, that, and the other thing about Me; put your credence in this and the other doctrine; accept this and the other promise; hope for this and the other future thing. All these come with, but are not the central act. He says, "Believe: believe in Me! 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life': he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." Do we rightly appreciate that? I think that if people rightly grasped this truth, it would clear away

rolling wreaths of fog and mist from their perceptions of the gospel—that Christ is *it*, and that the object of faith is not simply the truths that are recorded here in the Word, but He with regard to whom these truths are recorded. The whole feeling and attitude of a man's mind is different, according as he is trusting a person, or according as he is believing something about a person. And this, therefore, is the first broad truth that lies here. Faith has reference, not merely to a doctrine, not to a system, but deeper than all these, to a living Lord—"faith that is in Me."—*Alex. Maclaren, D.D.*

(3) *Everything pertaining to Christ, yet not in any of these apart from Himself.*

a. Not in His earthly life apart from Himself.

[14840] The history of Christ, especially in His earthly life, is presented to us on the evangelic page, in order that we may believe it. But the real object of faith is not that history, but He whom that history presents to us. We believe in the nativity of the manger-cradled Child, and this so far is well; but it is not faith unless our trust is in the Child who thus was born. We believe in the crucifixion, and this so far is well; but it is not faith unless we are resting on Him who was crucified. We believe that Jesus wept, and that He bled, and this so far is well; but it is not faith unless we are trusting in Jesus Himself; not in His tears, but in Him who shed them; not in His blood even, but in Him who bled.—*Ibid.*

b. Not in His names apart from Himself.

[14841] The names of Christ are given in Scripture, and every one of them is significant: Jesus, the Saviour; Christ, the anointed; Messiah, the sent one; Immanuel, the God-man; yet a name is not the real object of faith. For when we are commanded to believe in the name of Jesus Christ, it is not the mere appellation, Jesus, or Christ, or Immanuel, that we are to trust in for salvation; but in Him whom these names designate—the Jesus, the Christ, the Immanuel, the glorious and gracious Being who is thus called.—*Ibid.*

c. Not in His offices apart from Himself.

[14842] The offices of Christ are set forth in Scripture; but neither an office nor its badges is the real object of faith. For what were the prophetic office without a living prophet? or what the priesthood without a living priest? or what monarchy without a living monarch? It is, then, not the offices of Christ, not His prophethood, nor His priesthood, nor His kingdom, that are the object of saving faith, but Himself—the Prophet, the Priest, the King. So neither are the badges of Christ's offices, any more than these offices themselves, the real object of faith; not the Bible, which He holds in His hand as the prophet of God, but Himself who is to open our hearts to receive and understand His truths; not the sacrifice which He holds in His hand as the priest of God, but Himself, who, as He shed that blood for us,

must also sprinkle us with it; not the sceptre which He holds in His hands as God's anointed King, but Himself; for not the sceptre, but the hand which holds it, can protect or shield us.—*Ibid.*

d. Not in His redemptive work apart from Himself.

[14843] Yet once more, the work of Christ is fully set forth in the Scriptures, and in the reality, the fulness, the fitness, and the sufficiency of that work, we must believe if we are to be saved. Still it is not that work, as separated or viewed apart from Him who undertook and finished it, that is the real object of faith. To trust in redemption, while not trusting in the Redeemer, is not saving faith. Redemption can never apply itself to my soul any more than a medicinal cup can raise itself to the lips of a sick man. The balm which is in Gilead could never heal my sin-diseased spirit unless there were also a physician to bind up its wounds. Behold, then, the attitude of faith—it sits at Calvary gazing on the mysterious work which was finished there; but from Calvary, while at the foot of the cross, it looks up to heaven, where Jesus is seated at the right hand of God, and thus it addresses Him: Thy work, O Lord, is glorious—Thou hast finished transgression and made an end of sin. Thou hast brought in an everlasting righteousness; but I look to Thee and to myself rather than Thy cross—I look to *Thee* to make that righteousness mine. I look to *Thee* to bestow upon me the blessings which are the purchase of Thy blood—I look to *Thee* who didst accomplish redemption, to apply it, as Thou only canst, unto my soul. Yes, Lord, Thy work was finished, all of it that could *then* be done; and who is to do that part of it which remains to be done *now*, even to make me a sharer in it? who is to do this but Thyself? and, therefore, I look to Thee to do it.—*Ibid.*

#### XIV. ITS TWO GREAT REALITIES.

[14844] To spiritual faith there are two great realities on which it gazes, and in which it supremely believes—the unseen kingdom of the future, and the unseen Christ in the present. Peter has connected both these with the trial of faith; for in his First Epistle (i. 4) he refers to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith;" and in the eighth verse to "Jesus Christ, whom having not seen they loved, and in whom, though now they saw Him not, yet believing, they rejoiced." Faith, then, discerns two things—a kingdom and a King. To its eye a world is visible behind and beyond the world of appearances; a world which is real, for its light never grows dim, while evenings darken over the visible world—whose beauty never fades, while the beautiful appearances of earth are ever changing. And this to the spiritual man is his reality, his home, the influences of which mould his present life, and in

prospect of which he "girds up the loins of his mind." By the eye of faith, again, there is a Presence discerned behind the appearances of the visible, on which the ardent passions of the spirit are centred—the presence of a King. Amid all work, all friendship, all sorrow in the apparent world, He is there—the Christ of Calvary, whose love is immortal amidst perishing earthly affections, whose truth is eternal amid the decay of human trust, whose sympathy is deep enough for the mightiest, and tender enough for the least of the sorrows and perplexities of life. Thus is faith the seeing of an unseen kingdom and of an unseen King.—*Rev. E. L. Hull.*

#### XV. ITS GROWTH AND PROCESS OF RIPENING.

[14845] Faith grows, like hope, like love, by converse. It is not an easy thing to see the invisible. It is not an easy thing to get the seen outshone by the unseen, and the temporal overborne by the eternal. That is the task set before us. We must learn so to live as that the will of Christ shall be stronger in us than the self-will, and the word of Christ more persuasive than the word of the world and of the devil. If we live not this life, which is the life of faith, how can we die that death, which is the death of the faithful? We must know Christ well now, or we cannot hope to have Him for our stay in the dark valley. And therefore let there be a diligent use of those things which are tenderly and lovingly given to us as means of grace.—*Dean Vaughan.*

[14846] Faith depends on the state of your hearts. It may be smothered by the lusts of other things in the soul. It may be undermined by an evil conscience. A life of unwatchfulness, of prayerlessness, of self-indulgence, will lead to the decay and, if persevered in, to the extinction of faith. The neglect of positive known duty, indulgence in any positive known sin, will be the death of faith. Truths, or propositions of an abstract or mathematical order, can suffer no obscuration, and be subject to no unbelief, by reason of an evil heart, or of an evil life; they touch no part of our nature but the intellect. But the truths of the gospel, while their foundation ever standeth sure, become obscured to a vision that is dimmed by the love of sin, often hateful even, to the heart in which sin reigns.—*C. Vince.*

[14847] Christ Himself can never lose His glory; He shines brighter than the sun, for in the sun there are spots, but in Him is no darkness at all; but sin blinds the sinner, or constrains him to turn away his eye from a light which is only hateful and distressing. Hence it is evident that if we would grow in faith we must grow in purity. These two act and react upon each other, and are the best helpers of each other. And we must watch against everything that would mar either. "So subtly

are we formed," it has been said, "that minor parts of our character often make or mar our greatest resolves." So that we must pay heed to the little as well as to the great, to the leak through which the least danger oozes as well as to the collision which may cause instant shipwreck. In the use of the means of safety and progress, let us neglect none. They are all "connected together by an indissoluble bond; their strength and virtue, as in the old man's faggot in the fable, being in their union. Not the Word without prayer, nor prayer without the Word, nor either without humility and obedience, will avail; all these, as all things, working, not separately, but working together, for our good."—*Ibid.*

[14848] When I am at the bottom of a flight of stairs they are very useful to me in getting up, but after I have got up I do not care for them. The steps of ripening into the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ are many and various; but when one has ripened into that state, all those steps are nothing to him, because he abides in the consciousness that he stands in the love and power of the Almighty God. There is this state into which men come, and in which they abide; and the world's heroes have dwelt in it until it is absurd for a man to question the reality of it. If delusions can make men so noble and brave and enduring and heroic as this faith does, then let them reign; but it is not a delusion, nor a cunningly devised fable.—*Anon.*

#### XVI. ITS EXTERNAL SUPPORTS.

[14849] After faith has put an end to inquiry, it is not inconsistent with the most undoubting confidence in the firmness of our foundation to marshal the arguments for the truth of Christianity, either for our own satisfaction or for the conviction of other men. But supposing it to be proved over and over again, once every year, that Christ is indeed the Saviour of the world, the question which still awaits us with ever patient endurance, and which must, sooner or later, be met, are these. And what then? Is the investigation of the credentials of Christianity the highest use to which Christ puts the minds of His disciples? Are we next year to return again to the weary work of reaping afresh this harvest of barren proof, which, after all, can never issue in a logical demonstration? May we not even suspect that there is some far more fruitful method of dealing with the Christian facts? and that this incessant demand for Christ's credentials is nearly as impertinent as to demand the credentials of the food which nourishes us, or of the sunshine which warms us, or of the mother who loves us? In reality, faith in Christ, whilst putting an end to the cautious forethought of preliminary investigation, becomes the point of departure for that great inductive inquiry into the contents of Christianity, and the application of its hidden resources to the spiritual



wants of mankind, which will give the final proof of Christ's saving power. This experiment must end, if rightly made, in the actual salvation of the world, or (if there must be an alternative) in the demonstration that Christ is a Saviour who cannot save the world.—*P. Strutt*.

## XVII. ITS QUALITIES.

### 1 It is simple and humble.

[14850] It is our duty to believe with humility and simplicity what the Holy Scripture hath taught us; and to be contentedly ignorant of what it doth not teach us, without indulging speculations or conjectures, which will only perplex the subject.—*Secker*.

### 2 It is operative and influential.

[14851] It is a mysterious, indescribable process, that of getting to believe—indescribable as all vital acts are. We have our mind given us, not that it may cavil and argue, but that it may see into something, give us clear belief and understanding about something whereon we are then to proceed to act.—*Carlyle*.

[14852] Faith is a Christian's right eye, without which he cannot *look* for Christ; right hand, without which he cannot *do* for Christ; it is his tongue, without which he cannot *speak* for Christ; it is his vital spirit, without which he cannot *act* for Christ.—*Thomas Brooks*.

[14853] The right faith of man is not intended to give him repose, but to enable him to do his work. It is not intended that he should look away from the place he lives in now, and cheer himself with thoughts of the place he is to live in next, but that he should look stoutly into this world, in faith that if he does his work thoroughly here, some good to others or himself, with which, however, he is not at present concerned, will come of it hereafter.—*J. Ruskin*.

[14854] Faith is not the lazy notion that man may with careless confidence throw his burden upon the Saviour and trouble himself no further—a pillow upon which he lulls his conscience to sleep, till he drops into perdition; but a living and vigorous principle, working by love, inseparably connected with true repentance as its motive, and with holy obedience as its fruits.—*E. Osler*.

[14855] Faith is not a bare persuasion or conviction resting upon the heart; for persuasion (which is nothing else but the proposal of suitable objects to the mind) is of itself no more able to effect this strange and mighty work than it is possible to persuade a man that is stark dead to be alive again. No; it is a living, active principle, wonderfully produced and created in the heart by the almighty working of God's Spirit, and which does as really move and act a man in the course of his spiritual

life, as his very soul does in the course of his natural. And this is that faith by which we stand: and if ever we are supported against the terrible assaults of our spiritual adversary, this must be our supporter.—*R. South, D.D.*

## XVIII. ITS SIGNS AND GENUINE MARKS.

[14856] The certainty that God will work all for good,—the seeing the dawn of morning from the hour of midnight,—the being able to detect the folds of the wing under the black shell of the chrysalis,—the seeing no single probable doorway to escape the difficulty, and yet to make no effort, but to feel sure that God will extricate; to see Isaac bound on the altar, and yet to believe that from him will spring a multitude,—are signs of a living faith which few possess, while the reward is—boundless, perfect peace.—*Monro*.

## XIX. ITS EXCELLENCES.

### 1 It is the great uniting grace.

[14857] Faith is the subtle chain that binds us to the Infinite.—*Mrs. E. O. Smith*.

[14858] Faith spans the gulf of death with the bridge of eternal life.—*D. Durand*.

### 2 It is the conquering grace.

[14859] Faith is the key which opens the door, and admits us into the presence-chamber of the King of Glory.—*Naogorgeus*.

[14860] Faith is so excellent a thing, and so absolutely needful to attain the privileges of the gospel, as without this we can do nothing; and until this be lost or weakened, we are safe and comfortable in all estates. For, as though a man fall into the hands of thieves, although they rob and spoil him of all he hath, yea, leave him stark naked in a wilderness to wind and weather, yet if they take not away his life, there is some hope of recovery, and a man may be restored again to a former estate, and labour to get more wealth, so fareth it with God's children in the wilderness of this world, although they are robbed, spoiled, and bereaved of earthly blessings, denied honour, riches, preferment, yea, left naked as it were in the sun, yet as long as faith remains, and that they are constant in the belief of the promises of the gospel, all other difficulties are overcome by this grace.—*J. Smith*.

[14861] Faith is the very power and arm of God for all true joy, sound comfort, and lightness at the heart-root in this life. This crowned empress of all those heavenly graces that dwell in the soul of a sanctified man, and which in a right sense may be said virtually to comprehend all the beauty, strength, excellency, and power of Christ Himself, is truly victorious and triumphant over all the world; over the very gates of hell and all the powers of darkness; over the devil's fiercest darts; over the

devouring flames of the raging fire; over the roaring fury of the most hungry lions; over the variety and extremity of exquisite tortures, of temptations, persecutions, all outward miseries; even over cruel mockings. It irresistibly beats down or blows up the strongest bulwarks and thickest walls; puts to flight the mightiest armies, and conquers the most invincible kingdoms. And when all is done—oh, blessed faith!—at the very last and deadliest lift, she triumphantly sets her foot upon the neck of the prince of terrors—I mean death, the last and worst; the end and sum of all feared evils: and even in the midst of those dying and dreadful pangs bears a glorious part with Jesus Christ the Conqueror in that sweetest song of victory, “O death, where is thy sting?” In a word, it can do all things. “All things are possible to him that believeth”—*R. Bolton*.

### 3 It is a tranquillizing grace.

[14862] Faith is a deep feeling of security for the present and the future; and this security arises from firm trust in an infinite Almighty and incomprehensible Being. Faith is a holy vessel into which every one is ready to pour his feelings and his imagination as completely as he can.—*Goethe*.

[14863] Faith will not make the sun rise sooner, but it will make the night seem shorter; for duration is measurable by feelings as well as by hours.—*Anon*.

[14864] By faith we are saved from all uneasiness of mind, from the anguish of a wounded spirit, from discontent, from fear and sorrow of heart, and from that inexpressible listlessness and weariness, both of the world and of ourselves, which we had so helplessly laboured under for many years; especially when we were out of the hurry of the world, and sunk into calm reflection. In this we find that love of God, and of all mankind, which we had elsewhere sought in vain. This we know and feel, and cannot but declare, saves every one that partakes of it, both from sin and misery, from every unhappy and every unholy temper.—*J. Wesley*.

[14865] It is not only the prerogative of faith that it adds to our peace and our joys in the prosperous scenes of life. Here, indeed, it moderates and directs, and governs our desires and expectations from the world—it gives serenity and contentment instead of the corroding cares and agitations of a worldly spirit—it gives to every blessing enjoyed the enhanced value of a gift from an eternal and an unfailing friend; and awakens that gratitude which, purified and invigorated, will hereafter pour the tide of ecstasy before the throne of God. But its power is still more triumphant in scenes of affliction and trial. To the eye of faith every event has a tendency and an aim. Nothing is accidental—nothing without a purpose. Amid all that is dark and dreary, in the storms and

tempests of this world, the sun of the believer's hopes is still shining in his strength. Faith shows him his God in the mild majesty of his parental character—

“From seeming evil still educing good,  
And better thence again, and better still  
In infinite progression.”

Faith penetrates the unseen world; and with heaven in view, with all its glories dawning on the sight, how must the light afflictions of a moment be lost when set in contrast with that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!—*N. W. Taylor*.

[14866] Faith's consolations do not fail at the hour of death, nor when the believer is called to judgment. Never, indeed, does he look at death without seriousness, nor forward to judgment without humility. Yet he often looks at both with composure, yea with triumph. By faith he is enabled to lean on His arm who has destroyed him that has the power of death, and to put away the tremblings of guilt. Faith sheds light on the darkness of the tomb, and looks to the morning of a glorious resurrection. Faith brings eternal glories near, and discloses, in earnest and foretastes, the joys of heaven, and sees the dark valley opening into the paradise of God. Faith rests its confidence on the atoning blood of Jesus, and on the threshold of eternity authorizes the triumphant shout, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” Faith appropriates the righteousness of him in whom there is no condemnation, and conducts fearless to the judgment-seat. Faith, then, can welcome death, for it is sleep in Jesus—the rest of heaven. It can welcome the judgment too, for that is the day of the consummation of its hopes, the day of eternal triumph, in which the believer will be seated on His throne above, to hold the palm of victory and to wear the crown of life.—*Ibid*.

### 4 It is a spiritually realizing grace.

*It pictures and anticipates heavenly realities.*

[14867] Faith is the pencil of the soul that pictures heavenly things.—*T. Burbridge*.

[14868] Faith converses with the angels, and antedates the hymns of glory; every man that hath this grace is as certain that there are glories for him, if he persevere in duty, as if he had heard and sung the thanksgiving song for the blessed sentence of doomsday.—*Bp. Taylor*.

[14869] Faith alone takes away the obstinate reluctance to contemplate the world to come, which we all naturally feel. For, at the bottom of that reluctance, lies a sense of hostility to God, and in faith we behold Him reconciled. But it tends, further, to carry our contemplations continually to the scene to which we are hastening; not merely reminding us generally that we are pilgrims and strangers here, but, in the toils of our pilgrimage, directing our eyes to our true

home, where "a rest remaineth for the people of God." In the perils of life sustaining us by the promise that for all who fight the good fight there is "laid up a crown of righteousness;" in the calamities of life calling to our remembrance that the "sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed;" in suffering and bereavement carrying us in hope to the world where "sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Nor in our happiest hours is it less solicitous to remind us how transient and perishing are the objects on which we are lavishing our best affections; making the great realities of futurity familiar objects of our thoughts (2 Cor. iv. 13).—*Bp. O'Brien*.

[14870] I envy no quality of the mind or intellect in others, be it genius, power, wit, or fancy, but I should prefer a firm religious faith to every other blessing, for it makes life a discipline of goodness, creates new hopes when all earthly hopes vanish, and throws over the decay and apparent destruction of existence the most gorgeous of all lights, awakens life even in death, and from corruption and decay calls up beauty and divinity, makes an instrument of torture and of shame the ladder of ascent to paradise.—*Sir Humphrey Davy*.

5 It is a constant, elevating, and ennobling grace.

(1) *It shines brightest in adversity.*

[14871] Faith is like the evening star, shining into our souls the more brightly the deeper is the night of death in which they sink.—*Mountford*.

[14872] No cloud can overshadow a true Christian but his faith will discern a rainbow in it.—*Bp. Horne*.

(2) *It elevates family relationships.*

[14873] Faith in God hallows and confirms the union between parents and children.—*Pestalozzi*.

(3) *It ennoble the whole life.*

[14874] Given a man full of faith, you will have a man tenacious in purpose, absorbed in one grand object, simple in his motives, in whom selfishness has been driven out by the power of a mightier love, and indolence stirred into unwearied energy.—*Alex. Maclaren, D.D.*

6 It is a supremely valuable and precious grace.

(1) *It is very precious in itself, and in its benefits to ourselves.*

[14875] Faith is precious:—1. As to its author (Heb. xii. 2; Phil. i. 29; John i. 12, vi. 65). 2. In its own nature (2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 John v. 11; 1 Tim. i. 15). 3. In its warrant (Titus i. 11; Heb. xi. 1). 4. In its object. Jesus (Isa. xlv. 22). 5. In His person, work, and offices. 6. In its effects on the heart (Rom. v. 1, xv. 13; Eph. i. 13). 7. In its influences on the mind under trials (Rom. viii.

28; Heb. xii. 11; Jas. v. 10). 8. In its fruits on the life and conversation. (1) Overcomes the world. (2) Purifies the heart. (3) Works by love. 9. In its triumph over death (1 Cor. xv. 57; 2 Tim. iv. 7).—*Grove*.

[14876] Faith is very precious in its benefits to ourselves, as we are taught by four apostles.

1. It is precious because it obtains our pardon and peace. A favourite thought this with St. Paul, who tells us of Christ, "a propitiation through faith in His blood." Justification is through faith, that it may be by grace. Justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. It is precious because it purifies our hearts. A favourite thought this with St. Peter. He has it in his speech at Jerusalem, that God had purified the hearts of Gentiles by faith (Acts xv. 9); and in his First Epistle he speaks of souls purified in obeying the truth. Indeed, this thought comes directly from the Lord Himself, who spoke from heaven of His saints, as those "who are sanctified by faith that is in Me" (Acts xxvi. 18).

3. It is precious because it is fruitful in obedience. A favourite thought this with St. James, who dwells strongly on works as the fruit and evidence of Christian faith. "I will show thee my faith by my works." "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. ii. 26).

4. It is precious because it overcomes the world. A favourite thought this with St. John. According to him, faith in Christ Jesus as the Son of God brings us into His attitude toward the world, and makes us sharers in His victory over the world. So the early Christians overcame the world of their time, and raised the name of Jesus above every name.—*Donald Fraser, D.D.*

(2) *It is a grace which God especially honours.*

[14877] As there is no grace that glorifies God so much as faith, so there is no grace that He glorifies so much as faith.—*W. Secker*.

## XX. ITS FOES.

[14878] Pride rebels against it, impurity is dulled to it, ind devotion chills it, worldliness chokes it, negligence lets it slip, an unholy will that it should not be; and all in common loose the soul's hold of faith, because they weaken grace, through which the soul has power to hold it.—*Dr. Pusey*.

## XXI. CERTAIN DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF FAITH IN CHRIST NEGATIVELY STATED.

1 Faith in Christ is to be distinguished from faith in the Holy Ghost.

[14879] The two are to be distinguished very much as the objective element in salvation is to be distinguished from the subjective. The Spirit's influence is, in experience, so blended



with the operations of our own mind, that we are unable to determine what is His and what our own. Under these circumstances, we are exposed to the danger of mistaking the human for the Divine, of becoming the subjects of mystical illusion. The fact is, no elevation of our spiritual nature will enable us to dispense with the truths of the gospel, and the great objective facts of the Redeemer's work. Accordingly, our Lord in describing the work which the Holy Ghost was to accomplish after His own departure, says: "He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you."—*P. Strutt.*

- 2 Faith in Christ is not to be taken as if it were all one with faith in the Holy Scripture.

[14880] The Bible has a most important office to fulfil in the salvation of the world, but it is to be distinguished from that occupied by the living Saviour Himself, and it is at our peril that we make it a substitute for Him. To put the Bible into Christ's place in our faith and worship would be to convert it into an idol, and idolatry always ends in stagnation and barrenness.—*Ibid.*

- 3 Faith in Christ is a principle quite distinct from faith in the Church.

[14881] The confounding of these two, and the attempt to make the Church a substitute for Christ, and the Pope His vicar, has proved, in the history of the past, one of the most fruitful causes of mischief to the interests of Christianity. The Church is a Divine institution of the highest value, and, as such, it is to be trusted to do its proper work. But the Church is not identical with Christ as the Saviour of the world. It cannot do the work which it is His peculiar glory to perform. It cannot safely be allowed to take His place in the love and worship of His disciples. When we look into Christ's face, we see a Divine beauty, which is very imperfectly reflected in the face of the Church. Although endowed with the perpetual gift of the Holy Spirit, and entrusted with the keeping of the Divine oracles, and made the receptacle of much of the realized salvation of the world, the Church is very far from giving to the nations an adequate representation of the person of Christ. She commits a grievous wrong against her Lord, when she fails to teach men to follow her, only so far as she follows Him. If Christ is no better than the Church, with all her imperfections and faults, the world would be justified in yielding to Him but a measured trust. It is not wrong for us to accept both articles of the creed: "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;" and "in the Holy Catholic Church;" but it is at a terrible risk that we fail to distinguish between principles which differ so widely from each other.—*Ibid.*

## XXII. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PROCESS AND THE ACT OF FAITH.

As a process faith is complex and difficult to describe; but as an act it is simple and comparatively easy of description.

[14882] Not a few, I suspect, greatly embarrass themselves by confounding faith as a process with faith as an act. For example, faith is said to be a looking to Christ, or a turning of the mind's eye towards Him, in order to see Him mentally; just as we turn the bodily eye towards any material object, when we wish to see it physically. Now to explain the *process* of vision is one of the most difficult things imaginable. Anatomists, after repeated dissections of the eye, are not yet agreed by what arrangement of its parts it is enabled to perform its several functions; whether, for instance, it is by muscular action alone, that, without a conscious effort of the will, its axis is altered to accommodate different distances, enabling us with the same organ to perceive objects which are near and also objects which are remote. The process of vision, or perception, then, cannot be fully explained even by our ablest opticians and anatomists. But the result of the process, or the act of seeing, is the simplest of all acts; for a child at once knows what you mean when you bid it look at an object, or when you ask it whether it sees an object. Even so is it with faith. As a process it is inexplicable, but as an act it is very simple. If we try to explain to others, or even think to trace, the mental process within ourselves, we will find it involved in the utmost perplexity. But the act of faith—the looking to Christ—there is no mystery about this. And the practical lesson which I would fain impress upon you is, that, instead of perplexing yourself with vain efforts to analyze the mental process, you should strive rather to perform the mental act. When a child is told by its parent to look to an object, it thinks not to excuse itself by saying, "How can I look to it, when I am ignorant of the mechanism of my eye and of the laws of vision?" The child probably is not aware that its eye has a mechanism, or that there are such things as laws of vision. It simply, and at once, does what it is bid; it looks in the direction indicated, and it sees the object none the less clearly because it is ignorant *how* or by what process it sees. So we must become as little children. We are bidden look to Christ with the eye of faith, and if we just do this, then we will find that we can see Him none the less clearly because we do not understand, nor can explain how, or by what secret process, it is we are able to see Him.—*W. Trail.*

[14883] It will not help, but rather hinder, our faith if we try to unravel it. Another than we has to do with the laws and the processes of spiritual vision. This department of the optics of faith belongs to Him who has to prepare the mental eye for our seeing Christ. Enough then for us that *He* understands His own work; that

the whole process is under *His* inspection, and is guided by *His* hand. How, or by what secret operation, the Divine Spirit acts upon the human organ; by what mysterious touch He readjusts its deranged mechanism; . . . or by what hidden laws He regulates its vision; or by what unknown conveyance He supplies it with light—these are things not for us too curiously to inquire into. What we have to do rather is to entreat Him to do *His* part of the work, that then we may do ours—He first opening and adjusting the eye of faith in us, and we then using it in looking to Jesus.—*Ibid.*

[14884] You will only embarrass and perplex yourselves if you try to discover the process of faith. Your safest course is to make sure that you are performing the act of faith. Are you turning the eye of the soul outwards, in order to see Christ, just by looking to Him? then rest assured that, by the Spirit's help, you *will* see Him. But if instead of this the eye of the soul is turned inwards to look at itself, then will you be perplexed, bewildered, and disappointed. For faith looking within, trying to see itself, is as if a man were to try to trace the passage of the sunbeams through the lenses of his eye, or to see the picture of an object which these sunbeams paint on the retina. The attempt is vain: he cannot see these. But faith, looking outwards to Christ, is as a man who, when he wishes to see an object, be it a tree on the river's bank beside him, or a star in the lofty expanse above him, turns his eye towards it, and thus sees it.—*Ibid.*

### XXIII. THE TWO LEADING DEMANDS WHICH GOD MAKES ON OUR FAITH.

[14885] These may be called the theoretical and the practical. By the theoretical demands on our faith I mean, above all, the demand to believe the doctrine of the Incarnation, which the understanding of man cannot fully grasp, but can recognize as worthy to have come from God. And by the practical demand I mean the demand that we should endeavour to conform to a moral ideal not only higher in degree, but in some respects different in kind, from any that would naturally commend itself to men.—*J. J. Murphy.*

### XXIV. THE UNCHANGEABLE NATURE OF FAITH AS TO ITS OBJECT AND ACTS.

1 Its object continues the same to the last.

[14886] Just as the same sun which lights up the grey morning, also kindles the blaze of noon-day, and floods with mellowed rays the evening sky, so is the same Jesus the object of faith from its commencement to its close—He is the first, and He the last—its Alpha and its Omega. Its life-long exercise is to study Him; its life-long effort is to please Him; its life-long delight to enjoy Him; and its life-long hope is, when life

is over, to be with Him in His Father's house above. Yes, blessed Jesus, as my faith gathers experience, it will be of Thee; as it becomes more active, it will be for Thee; as it clings more, it will be to Thee; as it loves more, it will still be Thee. Forget Thee, O Jesus, my first, my truest Friend; grow weary of Thee, my constant and unchanging Benefactor; seek another than Thee, Thou chosen of my heart; turn away from Thee, who didst not turn from me when I came to Thee, a poor, miserable sinner; deny Thee, who didst not disown me when I was in misery, and want, and wretchedness; cease to devote my life, my all to Thee, who hast given *Thy* life and *Thine* all for me! No, exclaims faith, never can I forget Thee, never grow weary of Thee, never turn from Thee, or deny Thee, or cease to live for Thee. When the storms of affliction come, let me hear Thy voice, that Thou art near me; when my sky is bright, be Thou its sun; when I enter the sanctuary, be it Thy salutation to greet me with peace; when I kneel at the footstool, be Thy name upon my lips; when I break the bread and drink the wine of sacrament, be Thou present to me in these Thy symbols: while I live, be Thou my life; when I die, be Thou my resurrection; when I enter heaven, be Thou the first to welcome me; and while through endless years I touch the golden harp, be Thou my theme, my first, my last, my only Saviour!—*W. Trail.*

[14887] Faith which has brought us to the cross of the Redeemer for pardon for sin, directs us to the efficacy of the same stupendous sacrifice for all protection from sin's snares, and all cleansing from its pollution. So far as we are to be restored to the purity of our lost estate here, faith directs us to look for this restoration, not to any visionary spring of renovation in our corrupt and fallen nature, but to the same "fountain open for sin and uncleanness;" and gladly and gratefully acknowledges, therefore, that if we bring forth any fruit in righteousness, it is not ours, but His. But faith rests on views of God's demands upon us, which will not allow us to think highly of such fruit. It brings our lives to a standard of duty, by which our best actions show too poorly for spiritual pride. And while it keeps in sight continually the sense that we only stand in His sight as seen and accepted in Him who is the "Lord our Righteousness," it prompts unceasingly the apostle's fervent aspiration, that we may be found in Him, not having our own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God.—*Bp. O'Brien.*

2 Its action continues the same to the last.

[14888] What a believing soul does in the very hour of its conversion, that it continues to do through the whole progress of its sanctification. Its faith is a continual looking to Christ—a continual coming to Christ—a continual receiving, resting on, and following of Christ. Not alone, in the moment when a soul is born

again, does its eye open on Christ; but always and ever after, to Him, the object of its first fond gaze, does it look with still as wistful and as loving an eye. To Him not only its first quickened desire, but also all its after-longings and all its after-desires go forth. Not only when, for the first time, it takes up its cross, does it follow Him; but still bearing that cross, it ceases not to follow Him till death shall end its earthly pilgrimage. Not merely when first it feels its weakness and perceives its danger; but for every duty, in every trial, and in every strait, it still leans upon Him. And the faith of that soul, which is not constantly looking to Christ, and as constantly coming to Christ, and as constantly resting on Christ, is not in a healthful, but in a drooping condition.—*W. Trail.*

[14889] See yonder child, since first it began to recognize a mother's face, for whose smile does it turn its bright and beaming eye, so often as for hers? And ever since it first crept to her knee, to whom, now that it can walk, does it come so often as to her? What name is on its lisping lips, so often as hers? What lap does it lay its laughing face on, so often as on hers? And when that child is grown to be a man, what image is most present to his mind on some far distant shore? It is his mother's. What words does he remember most in this land of strangers? They are his mother's. Whom does he think most of meeting, when he shall return to the home of his boyhood? It is his mother. And how is this? It is because his first conscious thoughts—his first deep impressions—the first outgoings of his young heart's affections, were towards his mother. And if nature thus retains and thus repeats her first and deepest impressions, shall it not be so with grace? Its first, its fondest, its deepest impressions were of Christ—the first look it got of Him—oh! how vivid! The first embrace it received from Him—oh! how close! The first sound it heard of His voice—oh! how thrilling. And are these to be forgotten? or is He to be forgotten? Never while the heart can beat, or memory can recall the past.—*Ibid.*

#### XXV. WEAK AND STRONG FAITH CONTRASTED.

[14890] If you would know what it is to rest on Christ, and so to take Him, though there be some reluctance, some doubt, some fear, you shall know it by this: if a man have so taken Him, that still he is growing, still his faith is prevailing, still his faith is overcoming those doubts and fears from day to day, he is better and better resolved; I say, though his faith be not perfect at the first, yet, if it be still thus on the growing hand, it is saving and effectual faith. Whereas another man, that is not soundly rooted, that is divided thus, he takes Christ, but it is not upon any good ground, but as the weather-cock stands such a way, while the wind blows that way; not because the weather-cock is fixed (for when the wind turns, the weather-

cock turneth too): so, such men cleave to Christ, not because they have any good ground, but because they want temptations to a contrary way: let temptations from the world come; let there come reasons that they knew not before; let there come new objects, new allurements, which they knew not of before, they will forsake Christ again.—*J. Preston.*

[14891] 1. Strong faith will make the soul resolute in resisting, and happy in conquering the strongest temptations (Heb. xi. 38; Dan. vi. 10). 2. It will make a man own God and cleave to, and hang upon God in the face of the greatest difficulties and dangers (Psa. xlv. 16–18; Rom. iv. 18). 3. It will enable men to prefer Christ's cross before the world's crown, to prefer tortures before deliverance (Heb. xi. 3). 4. It will make a soul divinely fearless, and divinely careless; it will make a man live as a child lives in the family, without fear or care (Psa. xxiii. 4; Dan. iii. 16; Micah vii. 7–9). 5. It will make a man cleave to the promise when Providence runs cross to the promise (Numb. x. 29; 2 Chron. xx. 9–11; Psa. lx. 6, 7). . . . 6. It will make men comply with those commands that do most cross them in their desirable comforts (Heb. xi. 8, 9).—*T. Brooks.*

[14892] That I may quicken you to press after a higher measure of faith, I offer the following considerations:—(1) Little faith is not easily discerned; and when faith is not discerned, God loses the glory of His own grace, and you also lose the comfort of it. (2) The world we live in requires a strong faith: Red Seas and Jordans of trouble lie in our way to Canaan, through the howling wilderness. (3) Contentment with little faith is no good sign of the reality of faith. (4) Strong faith hath great advantages beyond a weak: it gives firm and solid peace; it brings great joy; it is more steady in a storm; it has more confidence in entering into the holiest.—*Erskine.*

#### XXVI. TRUE AND FALSE FAITH CONTRASTED.

[14893] The stamp and outer form of counterfeit and of genuine coin are alike—even more alike than two pieces of gold stamped differently; though, inwardly, the base metal and the gold differ in the real and essential point. And so it is with false and genuine faith. They are very much alike in outward semblance; but they differ in this all-important point—that false faith is a rash and unreasonable submission of the will and understanding to a *supposed* Divine authority; true faith is a deliberate and rational submission to the guidance of an authority, *proved* by sufficient evidence to be Divine.—*Abp. Whately.*

[14894] Sound; not rotten; not hollow; not presumptuous. Sound in the act; not a superficial conceit; but a true, deep, and sensible apprehension; an apprehension not of the brain, but



of the heart; and of the heart, not approving or assenting, but trusting and reposing. Sound in the object; none but Christ: He knows that no friendship in heaven can do men good without this.—*Bp. Hall.*

# XXVII. THE RELATION OF FAITH TO SOME THINGS WHICH ARE COMMONLY REGARDED AS ITS ANTI-THESIS.

## 1 To doubt.

[14895] If thy faith have no doubts, thou hast just cause to doubt thy faith; and if thy doubts have no hope, thou hast reason to fear despair; when, therefore, thy doubts shall exercise thy faith, keep thy hopes firm to qualify thy doubts; so shall thy faith be secure from doubts, so shall thy doubts be preserved from despair.—*F. Quarles.*

[14896] Honest doubt is never entire doubt, but rather infant faith struggling into existence—

An infant crying in the night,  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry.

To be content with such faith is not well; to despise it is cruel and wrong.—*W. Saumarez Smith.*

## 2 To knowledge.

[14897] Knowledge precedes faith; faith produces love; love evidences faith: it shows it to be true; it is not the cause of faith, but the sign of it, as breath is of life, and a full tide of a full moon.—*T. Fuller.*

[14898] Faith supposes knowledge. We cannot believe any testimony except we first hear it, and in some measure understand it. Were a person to declare anything to us, although we might have no doubt as to his veracity, yet if we understood not what he said, if he spoke to us in an unknown tongue, if we had no just apprehension of the terms of his declaration, we could not possibly believe his testimony; it would awaken no corresponding ideas in our mind. So with regard to the testimony of God, we must know the truth before we can believe it; spiritual illumination comes first, and then faith. "How," asks the apostle, "shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." "This," says our Saviour, "is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." The Spirit first enlightens the understanding, and then enables us to embrace the truth. Faith, far from being, as some suppose, the offspring of darkness and ignorance, is the child of light and knowledge; it is not opposed to reason, but is itself a rational act; and can only be correct when the understanding is enlightened, and neither blinded by prejudice, nor led astray by error.—*Paton J. Gloag, D.D.*

## 3 To reason.

[14899] Faith elevates the soul, not only above sense and sensible things, but above reason itself. As reason corrects the errors which sense might occasion, so supernatural faith corrects the errors of natural reason, judging according to sense.—*Leighton.*

[14900] As faith is the evidence of things not seen, so things that are seen are the perfecting of faith. I believe a tree will be green when I see it leafless in winter. I know it is green when I see it flourishing in summer. It was a fault in Thomas, not to believe till he did see; it were a madness in him, not to believe when he did see. Belief may sometimes exceed reason, not oppose it; and faith be often above sense, not against it. Thus, while faith doth assure me that I eat Christ effectually, sense must assure me that I taste bread really. For though I oftentimes see not those things that I believe, yet I must still believe those things that I see.—*Warwick.*

[14901] I do not seek, O Lord, to penetrate Thy depths; I by no means think my intellect equal to them; but I long to understand, in some degree, Thy truth, which my heart believes and loves.—*St. Anselm.*

[14902] Faith does not first ask what the bread is made of, but eats it. It does not analyze the components of the living stream, but with joy draws water from the "wells of salvation."—*J. R. Macduff.*

[14903] It remains that where God's wisdom is, there is no longer need of man's. For before, to infer that He who made the world, such and so great, must in all reason be a God possessed of a certain uncontrollable, unspeakable power, and by these means to apprehend Him—this was the part of human wisdom. But now we need no more reasonings, but faith alone. For to believe on Him that was crucified and buried, and to be most fully persuaded that this Person Himself both rose again, and sat down on high—this needeth not wisdom, nor reasonings, but faith. For the apostles themselves came in not by wisdom, but by faith, and surpassed the heathen wise men in wisdom and loftiness, and that so much the more, by how much to raise disputings is less, than to receive by faith the things of God. For this transcends all human understandings.—*St. Chrysostom.*

[14904] It is entirely wrong to speak of an opposition between believing and knowing in the sense that by it the realm of the religious life in general, or even that of the life in the God of present grace—of the revealed faith—is separated from the opposite. All faith rests upon knowledge, and when it is not produced by deduction or logical demonstration, it must ground itself upon spiritual perception and contact. Knowledge and faith are distinguished from each other like cognition and recognition, so, faith is an exercise of obedience, of recogni-

[14904—14910]

tion, and hence of trust, of surrender. Believing and knowing are also distinguished from each other like cognizing and understanding, and in all realms of life believing has the privilege of going farther than is possible to the understanding.

[14905] I have no toleration for those who tell us with a sigh, too often of affectation, that they are very sorry that knowledge or reason leads to contradictions and indissoluble doubts, from which they are longing to be delivered by some mysterious faith. It is time to put an end to this worse than civil strife, to this setting of one part of the soul against another. The intelligence and the faith are not conflicting, but conspiring elements.—*McCosh, D.D.*

[14906] Whatever is the subject of faith should not be submitted to reason, and much less bend to it.—*Pascal.*

[14907] In the order of nature belief always precedes knowledge—it is the condition of instruction. The child (as is observed by Aristotle) must believe in order that he may learn; and even the primary facts of intelligence—the facts which precede, as they afford the conditions of, all knowledge—would not be original were they revealed to us under any other form than that of natural or necessary beliefs.—*Sir W. Hamilton.*

[14908] Reason and faith are not antithetical. They are not opponents. They are not different one from the other. They are the same thing: only, what is called reason by scientists is reason acting upon matter, and demanding for its conviction the evidence which matter is able to bring to our senses, while faith is reason acting upon relations, qualities, absent things, the future, the past, all the great realm in which move man's noblest developments—heroism, courage, love, joy, aspirations, longings, sorrows, griefs; the whole product of the ever-creating human brain that is ordinarily poured out intangibly to the senses. Reason acting on these elements, and accepting their existence and nature according to the law of evidence that belongs to them, is faith. That is the realm in which faith is acting. And faith and reason are one. They are not separate. The popular cry is as if reason received things that have good, sound evidence; and as if faith was receiving things that have no evidence at all, except the priest's or somebody else's say so. Men say, "There ought not to be any quarrel between faith and reason: we believe reason on the testimony of men, and faith on the testimony of God"—which in one sense is true, but which in other senses is not true. Reason must run through the whole scale, or else we group: for reason is to our inward nature what the eyes are to our outward nature. Alone it is good for nothing. What would a pair of eyes be good for that went wandering up and down through the earth, seeing, but not seeing for anything that was behind them: not seeing for the sake

of the hand; not seeing for the sake of the foot; not seeing for the sake of joy, or hope, or anything but seeing? The eyes have a use. They are to see for the sake of the head, for the sake of the shoulder, for the sake of the arms, for the sake of the wrists, and for the sake of the fingers. They are to see for the heart, for the stomach, for the knees, for the ankles, and for the feet. They are to see for all the outward development of the human body.—*Ward Beecher.*

[14909] Reason is the eye for the whole inward man. It sees for conscience; it sees for love; it sees for hope; it sees for personal affection; it sees for every emotion; it sees for the sense of taste; it sees for beauty, for proportion, for combinations, for all grouping of beautiful things, for the relations of magnanimity, of heroism, and of infinity. Reason is the eye of the soul, and sees for it all; and it is more employed in faith than it is in the judgment of facts. It deals with exalted theories. It is as if natural reason were a justice of the peace, that deals with the ten thousand petty squabbles that belong to the neighbourhood, and settles them; and it is as if the reason acting in relation to the higher thoughts and elements of the human soul were a chief-justice, that sits on the bench to determine great questions and principles of law, and not to decide matters relating to village quarrels. The reason is nowhere so sublimely apparent as in the acts of faith, so called.—*Ibid.*

[14910] To those who accept the inductive principle, which teaches us to collect general truths from particular examples, the solution of the problem is found in the fact that the two orders of sequence do not form an alternative, but are a pair of processes mutually helpful to each other. Both are equally valid, and have their share in our intellectual progress, just as in walking we put our right foot before the left, and then the left before the right. And although, as a matter of fact, one or the other must have begun the long pilgrimage when on the nursery floor we first learnt to walk, it is practically of no consequence to our real progress to determine which of the two it was. Inquiry, when it comes first, helps faith; and when faith comes first, it helps inquiry. It is an example of the old proverb, *Manus manum lavat*. In all experimental research this interchange of precedence is necessary. If, for example, we have no faith in the ability of a writer, we shall not care to take the trouble to understand what he has written; and before we come to have faith in him we must examine what he has written, or trust to the reputation he has obtained. Accordingly we find Coleridge, in order to obtain for one of his works a fair reception at the hands of his readers, saying: "Without a certain portion of gratuitous and (as it were) experimentative faith in a writer, a reader will scarcely give that degree of continued attention without which no didactic work worth reading can be read to any wise or profitable purpose."—*P. Strutt.*

[14911] St. Augustine made a near approach to the true solution when he said, "Intellige ut credas verbum meum: sed crede ut intelligas verbum Dei."—*Anon.*

#### 4 To science.

[14912] Physical science and faith are not commensurate. Faith relates to that which is supernatural; science to that which is natural. Faith rests upon what is supernatural, science upon means natural—powers of observation, indication, combination, inference, deduction. Faith has to do chiefly with the invisible; science with the visible order of things. Science relates to causes and effects—the laws by which God upholds this material creation; faith relates to God, His Revelation, His Word. Faith has the certainty of the Divine gift; science is the human certainty—the human reasoning. Faith is one Divine, God-given habit of mind; it is one and the same in the well-instructed peasant and in the intellectual philosopher.—*Dr. Pusey.*

### XXVIII. THE RELATION OF FAITH TO THE OTHER CHRISTIAN GRACES.

#### 1 To the other Christian graces generally.

[14913] Faith is based on humility, rooted in love, directed through a holy will, fed by contemplation, quickened by devotion, nurtured by study of the words of the Eternal Word, strengthened by spiritual growth, sees through purity of soul, lives in action.—*Ibid.*

[14914] Faith is the root of all virtues; for faith is the hand by which we lay hold of God; and like the God on whom we lay hold, its attributes vary with its relations. We call God wise, and holy, and just, and good, and mighty, just as the occasion calls into display one attribute of His indivisible being or another. So faith becomes impersonated in one grace or another, according to the occasions calling for its exercise. In the presence of fraud it becomes vigilance, in the presence of danger fortitude; beneath the pressure of difficulty it is manliness, and in prolonged trial strength and energy. But the life of the grace is the same in every case. Faith is the vital principle; and the whole spiritual life ebbs and flows with its alternations. It is faith that overcometh the world. All things are possible to faith, because all things are possible with God.—*E. Garbett.*

[14915] Not a grace stirs till faith sets it awork. Faith sets repentance awork; 'tis like fire to the still. Faith sets hope awork. First we believe the promise, then we hope for it. Did not faith feed the lamp of hope with oil, it would soon die. Faith sets love awork. Gal. v. 6: "Faith which worketh by love." Who can believe in the infinite merits of Christ, and his heart not ascend in a fiery chariot of love? Faith is a *catholicon*, or remedy against all troubles; a sheet anchor we cast out into the sea of God's mercy, and are kept from sinking in despair. Other graces have done worthily, but thou (O

faith) excellest them all. Indeed in heaven love will be the chief grace, but while we are here militant love must give place to faith. Love takes possession of glory, but faith gives a title to it. Love is the crowning grace in heaven, but faith is the conquering grace upon earth.—*J. Watson.*

[14916] Faith is the silver thread upon which the pearls of the graces are to be strung. Break that, and you have broken the string—the pearls lie scattered on the ground; nor can you wear them for your own adornment. Faith is the mother of virtues. Faith is the fire which consumes the sacrifice. Faith is the water which nurtures the root of piety. If you have not faith, all your graces must die. And in proportion as your faith increases, so will all your virtues be strengthened, not all in the same proportion, but all in some degree.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

[14917] Faith is the first grace in a Christian soul, and the spring of the rest. This is the main business of that excellent chapter, Heb. xi., to show how faith was the master-wheel in the lives and actions of those holy men whose renown is there upon record. The apostle tells us that "faith worketh by love," where by *love* we may understand either generally the universal habit of all other operative graces; and then the sense is, that faith doth, as it were, actuate and animate all other habits of grace, and apply them to their several works; or rather particularly "that love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost."—*Bp. Reynolds.*

#### 2 To love.

[14918] Faith will obviously have for its certain and immediate consequence, love. Nay, the two emotions will be inseparable and practically co-existent. In thought we can separate them. Logically faith comes first, and love next, but in life they will spring up together. The question of their order of existence is an often-trod battle-ground of theology, all strewn with the relics of former fights. But in the real history of the growth of religious emotions in the soul the interval which separates them is impalpable, and in every act of trust love is present, and fundamental to every emotion of love to Christ is trust in Christ.—*Alex. Maclaren, D.D.*

[14919] Faith gives us arms and conquests too; love inspires with courage, and bestows the crown.

[14920] To many, to myself formerly, whether faith justifies as an instrument or as a disposition perfected by love, appeared a mere dispute about words; but it is by no means of so harmless a character, for it tends to give a false direction to our thoughts by diverting conscience from the ruined and corrupt state in which we are without Christ. Sin is the disease. What is the remedy? Charity? Charity, in the larger



apostolic sense of the term, is the health, the state to be obtained by the use of the remedy, not the sovereign balm itself. Faith of grace? Faith in the God-manhood, the cross, the mediation, the perfect righteousness of Jesus, to the utter rejection and abjuration of all righteousness of our own? Faith alone is the restorative. The Romish doctrine is preposterous; it puts the rill before the spring. Faith is the source; charity, that is the whole Christian life, is the stream from it. It is quite childish to talk of faith being imperfect without charity; as wisely might you say that a fire, however bright or strong, was imperfect without heat; or that the sun, however cloudless, is imperfect without beams. The true answer would be: "It is not faith, but reprobate faithlessness."—*S. T. Colridge.*

### 3 To repentance.

[14921] Faith in Christ is trust in Him and in His work. But that this trust should be genuine, it is necessary that we should feel our need of redemption and truly desire it. A serious impression, therefore, of the importance of eternity and its interests, a real conviction of sin and its exceeding sinfulness, a heartfelt sense of our own guilt and depravity, of our helplessness, our weakness, our wants—must be felt by all who can be truly said to trust in Christ as knowing in whom they trust, and knowing, also, what they are confiding to His care. Repentance, therefore, is implied in faith, and is essential to it.—*Bp. O'Brien.*

[14922] Even as when a candle is brought into a room the candle light first shows itself before the candle comes into the room, though it be true there was the candle before there was light; so it is with these two graces, faith and repentance—first there must be faith before there can be repentance, and yet commonly we see the fruits of repentance before we can see the fruits of faith.—*J. Smith.*

[14923] In our trusting to Christ there is inseparably linked with it self-distrust. There are two sides to the thought; where there is reliance upon another, there must needs be non-reliance upon self. Take an illustration. There is the tree; the trunk goes upward from the little seed, rises into the light, gets the sunshine upon it, and has leaves and fruit—that is the upward tendency of faith—trust in Christ. There is the root, down deep, buried, dark, unseen. Both are springing, but springing in opposite directions, from the one seed. That is, as it were, the negative side, the downward tendency—self-distrust. The two things go together—the positive reliance upon another, the negative distrust of myself. There must be deep consciousness not only of my own impotence, but of my own sinfulness. The heart must be emptied that the seed of faith may grow; but the entrance in of faith is itself the means for the emptying of the heart. The two things co-exist; we can divide them in thought.

We can wrangle and squabble, as divided sects have done, about which comes first, the fact being, that though you can part them in thought, you cannot part them in experience, inasmuch as they are but the obverse and the reverse, the two sides of the same coin. Faith and repentance—faith and self-distrust—they are done in one and the same indissoluble act.—*Alex. Maclaren, D.D.*

### 4 To works.

[14924] Faith and works are as necessary to our spiritual life as Christians, as soul and body are to our natural life as men; for faith is the soul of religion, and works the body.—*Colton.*

[14925] Faith without works is like a bird without wings; though she may hop with her companions on earth, yet she will never fly with them to heaven; but when both are joined together, then doth the soul mount up to her eternal rest.—*J. Beaumont.*

[14926] Christian works are no more than animate faith, as flowers are the animate spring-tide.—*Longfellow.*

[14927] Faith and works are related as principle and practice. Faith—the repose in things unseen, the recognition of eternal principles of truth and right, the sense of obligation to an eternal Being who vindicates these principles—must come first. Faith is not an intellectual assent, nor a sympathetic sentiment merely. It is the absolute surrender of self to the will of a Being who has a right to command this surrender. It is this which places men in personal relation to God, which (in St. Paul's language) justifies them before God.—*Bp. Lightfoot.*

[14928] It was an unhappy division that has been made between faith and works, though in my intellect I may divide them, just as in a candle I know there is both light and heat; but yet, put out the candle and they are both gone; one remains not without the other. So it is betwixt faith and works; nay, in a right conception, *fides est opus*. If I believe a thing because I am commanded, that is *opus*.—*Selden.*

[14929] If faith produce no works, I see  
That faith is not a living tree:  
Thus faith and works together grow,  
No separate life they e'en can know:  
They're soul and body, hand and heart—  
What God hath joined, let no man part.  
—*H. More.*

[14930] All along the Scripture, where justification is ascribed to faith alone, there the word *faith* is still used by a metonymy of the antecedent for the consequent, and does not signify abstractedly a mere persuasion, but the obedience of a holy life performed in the strength and virtue of such a persuasion. Not that this justi-

fies meritoriously by any inherent worth or value in itself, but instrumentally as a condition appointed by God upon the performance of which He freely imputes to us Christ's righteousness, which is the sole, proper, and formal cause of our justification. So that that instrumentality which some, in the business of justification, attribute to one single act of credence, is by this ascribed to the whole aggregate of gospel obedience, as being that which gives us a title to a perfect righteousness without us, by which alone we stand justified before God. And this seems, with full accord both to Scripture and reason, to state the business of justification, by our equal poise both against the arrogant assertions of self-justiciaries on the one hand, and the wild opinions of the Antinomians on the other. But whether the obedience of a pious life, performed out of a belief or persuasion of the truth of the gospel, ought to pass for that faith which justifies, or only for the effect or consequent of it, yet certainly it is such an effect as issues by a kind of connatural, constant efficiency and result from it. So that how much sooner they are distinguishable by their respective actions from one another, they are absolutely inseparable by a mutual and necessary connection; it belonging no less to the faith which justifies to be operative than to justify; indeed, upon an essential account, more; forasmuch as it is operative by its nature, but justifies only by institution.—*R. South, D.D.*

[14931] Faith trusts in simple reliance on Jesus Christ, because it is convinced that He is the only and all-sufficient propitiation for all the sins of the whole world. Faith "worketh by love," because it realizes the affecting conception of God's unspeakable love to man, and "we love Him because He first loved us;" and because it, at the same time, assents to the truth of the inference, "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Faith "overcometh the world;" because it is fully persuaded that "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," that this world is not our home, but the pilgrimage only towards a better, and that, if we are in earnest to resist its temptations, "greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world." Faith "purifies the heart;" for it has a felt certainty that sin cannot enter heaven, and "the pure in heart" alone "shall see God;" because it embraces, claims, and receives His promises of sanctifying grace; and because, having in itself the hope that "when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is," it leads us to "purify ourselves even as He is pure." In a word, faith "hath works;" because it brings to bear upon us from the pages of Scripture, now felt to be the voice of the living God, every motive which can act on our moral constitution—duty and interest, hope and fear, gratitude and a constraining love—and combines them all towards one end, our holiness, which is at the same time God's service and our soul's safety.—*Bp. Jackson.*

## XXIX. THE TRIAL OF FAITH.

### 1 Its certainty.

[14932] Whatever grace may remain untempted, our faith is sure not to be the one in which the exception will be made. God, who gave faith, will keep it; God, however, who gave faith, will try it; but it may rise in resistive energy and ripen to final glory.—*C. N.*

### 2 Its necessity.

#### (1) *On account of the nature of faith.*

[14933] From its very nature, is it not obvious that faith must be tried, and must stand the trial, or die? (1) *It is a vision of the incorruptible kingdom;* but the corruptible world surrounds us with its glaring presence—presses on us with its intense forces—enchains the senses by its influences—entwines itself with all the duties of daily life; therefore the very existence of faith is a trial, and unless it be strong enough to resist those influences it must perish.

(2) *It is a vision of the invisible King, and a supreme trust in His presence;* but to see Christ as the source and spring of the soul's emotion is rendered so difficult by the constant rush and tumult of earth's life, the attractions of the world, and the power of sin, that our faith in that Presence only exists by resisting their power, and unless it overcomes them it must die.—*Rev. E. L. Hull.*

#### (2) *On account of the nature of the soul.*

[14934] It is a marvellous fact of our nature, that all belief in the unseen is strengthened through conflict with difficulties. We have illustrations of this in the discoverers and thinkers of all ages. They caught glimpses of truths which the world did not possess, and the attainment of them was ever rendered difficult by the incredulity and prejudices of man. But scorn, ridicule, slander, only made their faith grow stronger, and their belief became more resolute through persecution. This is yet more profoundly true of spiritual faith; for, apart from the power of outward appearances, there are carnal tendencies within which lie like clouds before the spirit's eye, and darkens its vision. Now trials, conflicts, temptations to unbelief which oppress with heaviness, awaken faith to resistive energy and clothe it with warrior might, and then it breaks through the delusions of appearances. Hence the first glad faith of the soul is not strong—struggles and temptations must oppress it, but they may mature it, they purge its eye until it sees the brighter dawn of the future, and realizes the unseen Christ at its side. Combine these two facts; faith, surrounded as it is by powers of the visible, must resist them or perish; its resistance gives it force, therefore faith must be tried that it may grow strong.—*Ibid.*

### 3 Its nature and method.

#### (1) *God trains belief by promise.*

[14935] It may seem a strange assertion that God's promises are trials of faith, but yet I think they form one of the severest kinds of

trials which faith can know, and sometimes oppress the soul with conflict and with sorrow. Every promise brings with it its own temptation. We know not our unbelief until some word of the Lord enters the soul, "dividing asunder the joints and marrow—discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart." To illustrate this, take the two great realities which spiritual faith apprehends: the incorruptible kingdom of the future, and the invisible King of the present. Both these great objects of belief are promises—both are temptations to unbelief. The promise of the invisible inheritance tempts faith by bringing it into conflict with unbelief. It is ever the case that the loftier the hope, the stronger is the temptation to unbelief. The man of genius, for instance, is ever tempted to disbelieve the glorious dreams of his soul; for linked with them come the voices of passion tempting him to let them go in present comfort and immediate satisfaction. Thus we can understand the strange language of the Psalmist respecting Joseph, when he said, "Until the time that His word came, the word of the Lord tried him." He was tempted by his imprisonment to quench in doubt those dreams of a splendid future; and only after a long trial—only after every appearance in life seemed to contradict the promise of God which had come to him in the dream visions—was his faith strong enough to receive its fulfilment. So it is with the Christian. The word of God regarding his future is a trial of his faith. The inheritance seems very far off, while the visible is near and palpable. Passion tempts him to forget it; slothfulness tempts him to let the vision fade; doubt, with hissing voice, suggests that it is merely a dream. You who have gained a glimpse of a higher world know that when you caught sight of its glory, the mocking voices of unbelief awoke to try you; you know that again and again you have been tempted to let the vision go in slothful ease, or to fancy that it was not meant for you. *There is your trial.* Let the belief go, and your vision fade; hold fast to it at all costs of sorrow and struggle, and the trial will strengthen you; your eye will become clearer, the light will grow brighter, and thus by the trial of the promise your faith will ripen into power.—*Ibid.*

[14936] Take the other great object of faith—the presence of the unseen Christ. That is a promise, and the promise is a trial in the same way; for it rouses all the dormant coldness of the soul when it endeavours to live as seeing Him. If men live in the love of the visible only, they know not the power of that dark unbelief which hides the love of the Christ which the eye cannot see. Let them live for that love, and they will know what temptations to unbelief mean. Hence it is that spiritual men so often complain of loneliness. The promise of the Lord has raised their aspirations and kindled their hopes, and they discover the dreary poverty of their own faith and power, which they knew not of until the promise came.—*Ibid.*

[14937] We often find it a weary task to serve God faithfully and earnestly, and do all life's common duties as under His eye; and He takes away human friends, and deprives us of human sympathy, and we marvel, knowing not that He is trying our faith in the unseen. Were life more full of sympathy, were its tasks less dreary and solitary, we should rest in life, and not gaze at an Immortal Presence by our side. As with the first disciples when they heard of their Lord's departure, "sorrow filled their hearts," and they discovered the difficulty of belief; so with us—it is expedient that He should be unseen. And as with them, when their faith was thus tried, it grew mighty, and they found Him present always, though invisible, and realized His love more powerfully than when He walked with them visibly upon earth; so with us in the hours when we find it hard to believe—when, feeling alone and heavy-hearted, we yet hold fast our faith in His presence. Those are the trials which bring out the clear eye that sees Him, and we feel that the strong love which throbs in the heart of the Saviour will abide with us unchangingly, till the evening shadows fall. Thus are God's promises manifold temptations, which try us in order that our faith may be matured by trial.—*Ibid.*

(2) *God trains belief by doubt.*

[14938] The temptation to unbelief rising from the absence of God's manifestations. There are times when we can only be sad and still; when we are tempted to feel "God has forgotten to be gracious;" when all faith seems to vanish, and we find no certainty on which to stand. All the noblest and most earnest men have felt this. It may be that even the Divine Master felt it when He uttered that awful cry on the cross: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It may be that then the Perfect Priest was entering into the trial of His brethren. But what mean these trials of doubt? We may fancy we are rapidly progressing in spiritual faith; but it is not good for us to live always in the calm sunshine of rejoicing belief, and God sends us back to learn, in suffering of spirit, what we are. All who know these times of utter gloom know also how they ultimately strengthen, by making us feel that strength is made perfect in weakness.—*Ibid.*

(3) *God trains belief by fire.*

[14939] It is not every one who experiences the trial by fire. But the men whom "God delights to honour" have to pass through the fiery suffering which purifies the soul. There are those who feel wave after wave of trouble roll over them; who can say with David, "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me;" who see all friends depart, all their dearest hopes perish; who, like Paul, feel the keen edge of unthankfulness, and are faithful through all. For them, by such angry fires, faith's eager eye and hope are purged and winged; by such their bonds are burst asunder, and "One is walking with them like the Son of God."—*Ibid.*



XXX. SUPERIORITY OF THE FAITH THAT  
SEES NOT, TO THE FAITH THAT  
SUCCEEDS SIGHT.

## 1 Such faith is more genuine in its nature.

[14940] Faith is the antithesis of sight. The apostle calls it, "the evidence of things not seen," the inward evidence. Faith does not exclude outward evidence, the evidence of testimony. It does not exclude, absolutely, the evidence of the senses—of sight, of touch; but sight and touch are not faith; and the faith to which they lead is not so genuine and noble as that which is reached without them. Thomas believed when he saw Christ, or after he had seen and handled Him; but that evidence of his senses *circumscribed the sphere of his faith*. His faith amounted to this: "I believe my eyes do not deceive me, that they are not looking upon an apparition or a personification. I believe my hands do not deceive me, that the wounds I have touched are the wounds of the crucified Christ." His senses showed the resurrection to be an actual fact. He was compelled to believe it, or to say, "My sense of touch and sight is untrue, and not to be depended upon;" and because he did not say that, did not think that, did not believe that, we say he believed in the risen Christ. What was there of nobility in a faith like that? compared with his who, in the absence of such evidence, or anything approaching to it, says, "My Lord and my God!" Because we cannot see Christ in the flesh, and because in consequence the sphere of our faith is *larger and wider*, we may have a more pure faith, a nobler faith, than Thomas, who believed not in the resurrection until he saw and touched the risen Body. The resurrection was revealed to Thomas through flesh and blood—his own flesh and blood brought into conscious contact with the flesh and blood of Christ. Blessed are they who have the revelation from heaven!—*Enoch D. Solomon*.

[14941] Many men base their faith on the historical evidence of Christianity; they believe because they have tested the evidences and have found them true. That is a higher faith than the faith of Thomas; but there is a faith higher still—the faith of those who rest their souls upon the bare truth, unsupported by historical proofs. "To believe, not because we are learned and can prove, but because there is something in us, even God's own Spirit, which makes us feel light as light, and truth as true—that is the more blessed faith." Some men call that a blind credulity, and say, "We cannot believe after that fashion." We do not ask you. If your mental and spiritual conditions are such that you cannot believe without subjecting the bulwarks of Christianity to a severe test, then subject them to a severe test; they will stand testing.—*Ibid*.

[14942] If you have nothing *within* you responding to Christ, constraining you to say with the Herodians, "Master, we know that Thou

art true," then analyze the proofs, arraign the miracles, subject to rigid criticism the outward life and inner character of Christ, and examine the internal and external evidence of the authenticity and harmony of the Gospels; but still we must tell you, that if you are making your faith utterly dependent on that, you are incapable of the higher, purer, nobler faith of those who, without all this, are inwardly constrained to believe and love and serve the risen Christ.—*Ibid*.

## 2 Such faith is more uplifting in its tendency.

[14943] Spiritual greatness is the child of faith. Men must go out of themselves and take hold of the Invisible before they can rise to the true platform of their nature. Let them believe in nothing beyond the low horizon of their senses, and in soul-stature they are small. The Divinest aspirations, the truest exaltations of being, the most blessed hopes, come from faith in that which is *unseen*. To believe in an absent Christ is better for the education of the soul, for the development of its spiritual powers, than if He were still on earth. Was it not so for the early disciples? While He was with them they were materialistic and selfish. They never became true spiritual men until they learned to believe in the *Invisible*.—*Ibid*.

## 3 Such faith is more honouring to its object.

[14944] They honour Christ more than Thomas did who, though they have never seen nor touched Him, believe in Him, trust Him, cast their sins upon His sacrifice, carry their sorrows to His sympathy by faith and prayer, love Him with the deepest, purest love of their hearts.—*Ibid*.

## 4 Such faith is more rich in its recompense.

[14945] The reward is present and prospective. They are blessed *now* in their faith, and *for* their faith. And they shall be blessed *hereafter*. In the Day of Judgment Christ will own those who now own Him, honour those who now honour Him. He still lives. The Carpenter's Son is now the crowned King of Heaven!—*Ibid*.

XXXI. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT  
VIEWED AS AN EXERCISE FOR THE  
PRINCIPLE OF FAITH.

[14946] Faith in Christ carries with it, as a constituent part of its object, faith in the Sermon on the Mount, though this has not been written down in any of our Church creeds, nor been recognized by the decree of any general council. And then, faith in the Sermon on the Mount, as a whole, includes in it the following among a multitude of other things. It includes faith in the Beatitudes, as containing the true principles of human blessedness, however broadly they are opposed to the prevailing spirit of the world. It includes faith in the principle which

pervades the social precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, namely, that "we are to accept duties rather than to insist on rights. And, to go no further, it includes faith in the Lord's Prayer, for this also forms part of the Sermon on the Mount. To believe in the Lord's Prayer, to believe that its petitions are based upon true hopes and true possibilities of humanity, is one of the greatest acts of faith, and it is only our faith in Christ that warrants it.—*P. Strutt.*

### XXXII. COMMON OBJECTIONS AND DIFFICULTIES RAISED.

#### 1 Is not faith an almost insignificant condition of membership in Christ's kingdom?

[14947] The word "belief" is not simple, but compound—a term most inclusive and exacting. Popularly understood, "belief" is supposed to denote an act of the mind in relation to statements which may be laid before it; as, for example, a man believes that Milton wrote "Paradise Lost," that Columbus discovered America, or that a ship will leave Britain for Africa upon a given day. But such a belief may amount to nothing more than that the man does not *disbelieve* these statements; or if it mean that he has examined the evidence for himself, yet not one of the statements may touch his deepest nature: it would give him no concern to know that Milton wrote the "Iliad," and that Homer wrote "Paradise Lost," or that the ship in question is not going to Africa, but to Asia. The man cannot be said to "believe," in any deep and true sense of that term. Belief means more than any act of the mere understanding can ever mean. Religion is not so much an appeal to the intellectual as to the moral nature.—*J. Parker, D.D.*

#### 2 Is not faith the characteristic of a weak nature?

[14948] This sneer underlies the remark of Madame de Staël: "Have you not observed that faith is generally strongest in those whose character may be called the weakest?"

[14949] The following observation of J. C. Hare, on virtues, answers the above depreciatory joting, and at the same time brings out an important particular about the triumph of faith: "The power of faith will often shine forth the most when the character is naturally weak."

[14950] If we are to believe vulgar declamation, and the sayings of people of the world, faith can be the portion only of weak minds and diseased imaginations. On the contrary, it is, in a certain degree, the common heritage of the human race; and, in the highest degree, the peculiar gift of elevated characters, of noble spirits, and the source of whatever in the world bears the impress of greatness.—*Prof. Vinet.*

#### 3 Why can a person be blamed for not believing, since faith is the gift of God?

[14951] Say you, Seeing we cannot *work* the

work of faith, why does He yet *command* it? Is it not a hardship to require of us what we have no ability to do? *Answer.*—Why do you send your little children to school with the A B C in their hand, before they can read one letter? You do not think it a hardship to put the book in their hand, and bid them read, though they know not a letter, because you offer to teach them yourself, or by another in your place. So here, we are commanded to "work the work of God;" which is, "to believe on Him whom He hath sent;" which yet is no hardship, notwithstanding utter inability for it in ourselves; because at the same time that He commands believing, He tells us, for our encouragement, that He Himself is the Author of faith, and is ready to work in us both to will and to do.—*Erskine.*

### XXXIII. THE GUILT AND CRIMINALITY OF UNBELIEF.

[14952] Why has a man not faith in the Lamb of God? Because his whole nature is turning away from that Divine and loving face, and is setting itself in rebellion against it. Why does a man refuse to believe? Because he has confidence in himself; because he has not a sense of his own sins; because he has not love in his heart to his Lord and Saviour. Unbelief men are responsible for. Unbelief is criminal, because it is a moral act—an act of the whole nature. Belief or unbelief is the test of a man's whole spiritual condition, just because it is the whole being, affections, will, conscience, and all, as well as the understanding, which are concerned in it. And therefore Christ, who says, "Sanctified by faith that is in Me," says likewise, "He that believeth not, shall be condemned."—*Alex. Maclaren, D.D.*

## HOPE.

### I. DEFINITION AND NATURE OF HOPE.

[14953] It is a term used in Scripture generally to denote the desire and expectation of some good (1 Cor. xi. 10); especially to denote the assured expectation of salvation, and of all minor blessings included in salvation, for this life and the life to come, through the merits of Christ.—*C. N.*

[14954] Hope denotes in Scripture—(1) A spiritual grace (1 Thess. i. 3), the act and habit of hoping. (2) The object hoped for (Col. i. 5; Gal. v. 5). It is a complex passion, consisting of the desire of some promised good, and the expectation of obtaining it. Implying three things—the desire of something good, something future, something attainable.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[14955] Hope is that pleasure of the mind which every one finds in himself, upon the

thought of a probable future enjoyment of a thing which is apt to delight him.—*J. Locke.*

[14956] Hope is the desire of some good, attended with the possibility, at least, of obtaining it; and is enlivened with joy, greater or less, according to the probability there is of possessing the object of our hope. . . . The hope of the Christian is an expectation of all necessary good, both in time and eternity, founded on the promises, relations, and perfections of God, and on the offices, righteousness, and intercession of Christ. It is a compound of desire, expectation, patience, and joy.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards).*

## II. ITS PECULIARLY CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

[14957] The tendency to look not to the past, but to the future, for types of perfection, was brought into the world by Christianity. Ancient literature gives few or no hints of a belief that the progress of society is necessarily from worse to better.—*Maine.*

[14958] Christianity is the religion of hope, and it is an essential point of its absolute character, for whatever is everlasting and eternal is absolute. To the Christian, as such, it is therefore not time, but eternity; not the present, but the future life, which is the object of his efforts and hope.—*Cyclopædia (McClintock and Strong).*

## III. ITS SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES.

[14959] Hope may be considered as (1) *pure* (1 John iii. 2, 3), because it is resident in that heart which is cleansed from guilt. (2) As *good* (2 Thess. ii. 16), in distinction from the hope of the hypocrite, as deriving its origin from God, and centring in Him. (3) It is called *lively* (1 Pet. i. 3), as it proceeds from spiritual life, and renders one active and lively in good works. (4) It is *courageous* (Rom. v. 5; 1 Thess. v. 8), because it excites fortitude in all the troubles of life, and yields support in the hour of death. (5) *Sure* (Heb. vi. 19), because it will not disappoint us, and is fixed on a sure foundation. (6) *Foysful* (Rom. v. 2), as it produces the greatest felicity in the anticipation of complete deliverance from evil.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards).*

## IV. ITS PERMANENT FEATURES.

"And now abideth . . . hope" (1 Cor. xiii. 13).

[14960] Some might say, Is hope a grace at all? is it not rather a gift? Can hope ever be a duty? Can hope sometimes be even a possibility? Are there not natures which cannot hope? are there not circumstances which preclude hope? are there not even truths which in some cases would make hope a lie? It is the

glory of the gospel—the gospel according to St. Paul, the gospel according to our Lord Jesus Christ—that it makes hope a grace. I will not ask, What would human life be without it? because you might answer, Human life is a dark and dreary journey; depression is its tone, despair is its destiny. But I will ask, What life might not hope if the gospel is true? Where is the limiting clause in the charter of a free salvation—the clause which bounds the Saviour's atonement, or the clause which bounds the Spirit's grace? And I will ask again, What life would not be the better, viewed even for time, viewed even for its work, if it cherished, if it exercised, if it made a duty of hope? "Be sober, and hope to the end," is a precept, not a permission, of the gospel. "Now abideth faith, hope . . ." is St. Paul's list of virtues. And shall hope die with the corruptible? Shall hope not enter the golden gates and walk the streets of pearl? Miserable, carnal conception! An immortality of stagnation! An eternity of monotony! All mine at once that ever shall be! No long, beautiful, boundless vista of perpetual growth, alike in knowing and being—nothing, nothing but an instantaneous, mechanical, stereotyped perfection, in exchange for the glorious limitless prospect which was the motive and the stimulus and the spring of the Christian runner and the Christian sufferer and the Christian soldier below! "There abideth hope."—*Dean Vaughan.*

## V. ITS NECESSITY AND VALUE.

x It is essential for man's comfort and happiness.

[14961] Oh, what were life,  
Even in the warm and summer light of joy,  
Without those hopes that, like refreshing gales  
At evening from the sea, come o'er the soul,  
Breathed from the ocean of eternity?

—*Prof. John Wilson.*

[14962] Scarce any passion seems more natural to man than *hope*, and considering the many troubles he is encompassed with, nothing is more necessary; for life, void of all hope, would be a heavy and spiritless thing, very little desirable, perhaps hardly to be borne; whereas hope infuses strength into the mind, and, by so doing, lessens the burdens of life.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards).*

[14963] There is, perhaps, no feeling which the human breast cherishes so nearly connected with its happiness as that of hope. And it was mercifully appointed that, in a world whose brightest visions of felicity prove but the shadow of a shade, whose past pleasures, while they feast the memory, leave the heart aching with a sense of their desertion, and whose present enjoyments vanish ere they are grasped, and wither ere they bloom, some more enduring realities should be held out to the anticipation of the spirit, fainting under weariness and disappointment.—*W. S. M.*



[14964] When sin had entered within the bowers of Eden, and the primal curse had been pronounced on the parents of the human race, Hope, the young and beautiful offspring of untainted joys, sojourned with the exiles, and attended on their wanderings. She cheered them with the song of future and happier days, pointed them to the horizon of eternal life, and showed the first glimmerings of that bright and morning star which should rise on Bethlehem and set on Calvary, but whose brightness should remain, and whose memory should live, till eternity had lost itself in its own vastness. Since then she has trod a thorny path, and partaken deeply of the wretchedness of the world, which she came to solace and to cheer. Time was when she could have flown over the obstructions of her path, but the cruelty of men has bound her wings, and her feet have been bled among the briars of the wilderness.—*Ibid.*

[14965] It has been the Christian bosom which has cherished best this worn and wandering pilgrim, while the pilgrim in her turn has warmed and cheered the bosom that gave her shelter. And while Hope has listened to the tale of sorrows which the suffering children of humanity have poured into her ear, her eye has kindled with the brightness of immortality, her voice has trembled with the inspiration of prophecy, and she has infused into their "song, in the house of their pilgrimage," the joy and peace of believing, and the assurance of eternal salvation.—*Ibid.*

[14966] Human life has not a surer friend, nor many times a greater enemy, than hope. Hope is the miserable man's God, which in the hardest gripe of calamity never fails to yield him beams of comfort. It is to man as a bladder to one learning to swim: it keeps him from sinking in the bosom of the waves, and by that help he may attain the exercise; but yet it many times makes him venture beyond his height; and then if that breaks, or a storm rises, he drowns without recovery. How many would die did not Hope sustain them! How many have died by hoping too much; this wonder we may find in Hope—that she is both a flatterer and a true friend. Like a valiant captain in a losing battle, it is ever encouraging man, and never leaves him till they both expire together. While breath pants in the dying body, there is Hope fleeting in the wavering soul. It is almost as the air on which the mind doth live.—*Ibid.*

[14967] There is one thing which may add to our value of hope: that it is appropriate unto man alone. For surely beasts have not hope at all; they are only capable of the present; whereas man, apprehending future things, hath this given him for the sustentation of his drooping soul. Who could live surrounded by calamities, did not smiling Hope cheer him with expectation of deliverance? There is no estate so miserable as to exclude her comfort. Imprison, vex, fright, torture, show Death with his

horriddest brow, yet Hope will dash in her reviving rays that shall illumine and exhilarate in the swell of these.—*Ibid.*

[14968] Hope does not more friend us with her gentle shine than she often fools us with her sweet delusions. She cozens the thief of the coin he steals; and cheats the gamester more than even the falsest die. It abuseth universal man, from him that stoops to the loam wall (a cot of clay) upon the naked common to the monarch on his purple throne. Whatsoever good we see, it tells us we may obtain it, and in a little time tumble ourselves in the down bed of our wishes, but it often performs like Domitian, promising all with nothing. It is indeed the rattle which Nature did provide to still the froward crying of the fond child, man. Certainly it requires a great deal of judgment to balance our hopes even. He that hopes for nothing will never attain to anything. This good comes of over-hoping, that it sweetens our passage through the world, and sometimes so sets us to work as to produce great actions. But then, again, he that hopes too much shall deceive himself at the last, especially if his industry goes not along to fertilize it. For Hope without action is a barren undoer. The best is to hope for things possible and probable. If we can take her comforts without transferring to her our confidence, we shall surely find her a sweet companion. I will be content my Hope shall travail beyond reason; but I would not have her build there. So I shall thus reap the benefit of her present service, yet prevent the treason she might beguile me with.—*Ibid.*

[14969] Hope is our life when first our life grows clear,  
Hope and delight, scarce crossed by lines of fear:  
Yet the day comes when fain we would not hope—  
But forasmuch as we with life must cope,  
Struggling with this and that—and who knows why?  
Hope will not give us up to certainty,  
But still must bide with us.—*Wm. Morris.*

2 It is essential alike for man's spiritual safety and moral vigour.

[14970] If we would be in a fit posture for suffering, we must get a lively hope of eternal life. As our life is a sea, hope is compared to an anchor, which makes us stand steady in a storm; as our life is a warfare, hope is compared to an helmet, which covers the soul in times of danger; as the body liveth *spirando*, by breathing, so the soul liveth *spirando*, by hoping. A man cannot drown so long as his head is above water; hope lifts up the head, and looks up to the redemption and salvation that is to come in another world, in its fulness and perfection.—*Polhill.*

[14971] Hope doth three things: it assures good things to come; it disposes us for them; it waits for them unto the end, each of which

will be of singular use to fit us for pious sufferings.—*Ibid.*

[14972] It is affliction that is to test the nature of your experiences. An anchor is not bad when it lies upon the deck ; it is convenient when we use it in a tranquil harbour ; but when the stars are hidden, and the storm is on the deep, and you are driving in upon the coast, then it is *salvation*. We need a hope, a faith, which, while it will be a convenience in fair weather, will be our mainstay on foul and stormy days.—*Ward Beecher*.

[14973] Hope is the soul of moral vitality, and any man or society of men who would live in the moral sense of life must be looking forward to something. . . . What is the past without the future ? What is memory when unaccompanied by hope ? Look at the case of the single soul. Is it not certain that a life of high earnest purpose will die outright if it is permitted to sink into the placid reverie of perpetual retrospect, if the man of action becomes the mere *laudator temporis acti* ? How is the force of moral life developed and strengthened ? Is it not by successive conscious efforts to act and to suffer at the call of duty ? So it is also in the case of a society. The greatest of all societies among men at this moment is the Church of Jesus Christ. Is she sustained only by the deeds and writings of her saints and martyrs in a distant past, or only by her reverent, trustful sense of the Divine presence which blesses her in the actual present ? Does she not resolutely pierce the gloom of the future and confidently reckon upon new struggles and triumphs on earth, and, beyond these, upon a home in heaven wherein she will enjoy rest and victory—a rest that no trouble can disturb, a victory that no reverse can forfeit ?—*Canon Liddon*.

## VI. ITS SOURCE.

[14974] In the religion of the New Testament hope is not a distinct and separate element. It has its root deep in that truth which is the centre and heart of all—the love of God. Because He is our Father, and all things are in His hand ; because we come into the world the children of God, and the whole structure of nature and providence is set to bring His children up to Himself—therefore our hope is sure.—*Anon.*

[14975] Hope, as a spiritual grace, is the gift of God, not only as He giveth the object, but as He works the effect, by illumination, by quickening, by inclination, and by excitation.—*Ibid.*

## VII. ITS POWER AND INFLUENCE.

1 Hope inspires, energizes, and sustains the moral and spiritual life.

[14976] Hope is a marvellous inspiration which every heart confesses in some season of

extremest peril ; it can put nerve into the languid, and fleetness into the feet of exhaustion. Let the slim and feathery palm-grove be dimly descried, though ever so remotely, and the caravan will on, spite of the fatigue of the traveller and the simoon's blinding, to where, by the fringing rootlets, the desert waters flow ; let there glimmer one star through the murky waste of night, and though the spars be shattered, and the sails be riven, and the hurricane howls for its prey, the brave sailor will be lashed to the helm, and see already through the tempests breaking, calm waters and a spotless sky. Ah ! who is there, however hapless his lot or forlorn his surroundings, who is beyond the influence of this choicest of earth's comforters ; this faithful friend which survives the flight of riches, and the wreck of reputation, and the break of health, and even the loss of dear and cherished friends ?—*W. M. Punshon*.

[14977] The land we are to possess is chiefly one of promise. We have a wilderness to pass through with its trials, dangers, and temptations. "Groanings" will at times be heard ; yet we are not to repine. Salvation on the condition of hope is advantageous. A state of waiting is one of moral worth, and helpful in the spiritual life. It tends to produce and develop the active qualities of endurance and fortitude, and the passive qualities of patience and resignation ; and it also fits us to appreciate and form a right estimate of the blessings in prospect. In daily life we see that the prize in the future frequently makes a man what he is ; and when his wishes are realized, and his ambition satisfied—in fact, when hope has found its accomplishment and ceased to exist—the same individual has not been unknown to deteriorate. The knowledge that the reward is ours at the end of the course, and would be forfeited or lessened by failure on our part, tends to call out our latent powers, stimulate our efforts, and produce states and habits of the soul which otherwise, without a miracle, could hardly exist. "Hope is the consoling and fortifying power. She prepares for heaven by maintaining the constant desire and expectation of its promised enjoyments. As faith dwells in the testimony of the glory to come, hope reposes on the glory itself. In hours of sorrow and trial, the magnificent vision still brightens through all their clouds, until, as it were, wrought into the substance of the soul, it becomes a part of its better nature ; and, colouring it with its anticipated heaven, fits it by the very earnestness of desire for the glory it desires" (W. Archer Butler, "Sermon on Jer. xxv. 17, and Col. i. 12").—*C. N.*

[14978] What is more delightful than hope ? this is the incentive, the support, the condiment of all honest labour ; in virtue whereof the husbandman toileth, the merchant trudgeth, the scholar ploddeh, the soldier dareth with alacrity and courage, not resenting any pains, not regarding any hazards, which attend their undertakings : this the holy apostles tell us did enable

them with joy to sustain all their painful work and hazardous warfare, enjoining us also as to work with fear, so to rejoice in hope.—*I. Barrow.*

[14979] Hope is the engine that moves the world, keeps the intelligent part of it in action everywhere. No man could rationally stir in pursuit of any design whereof he despaired.—*Anon.*

[14980] What makes the merchant sell house and land, and ship his whole estate away to the other end almost of the world, and this amidst a thousand hazards from pirates, waves, and winds, but hope to get a greater by this bold adventure? What makes the daring soldier rush into the furious battle upon the very mouth of death itself, but hope to snatch honour and spoil out of its jaws? Hope is his helmet, shield, and all, which makes him laugh in the face of all danger. In a word, what makes the scholar beat his brains so hard, sometimes with the hazard of breaking them, by overstraining his parts with too eager and hot a pursuit of learning, but hope of commencing some degrees higher in the knowledge of those secrets in nature that are locked up from vulgar understandings? who, when he hath attained his desire, is paid but little better for all his pains and study, that have worn nature in him to the stumps, than he is that tears the flesh off his hands and knees with creeping up some craggy mountain which proves but a barren, bleak place, to stand in, and wraps him up in the clouds from the sight of others, leaving him little more to please himself with but this, that he can look over other men's heads, and see a little further than they. Now if these peddling hopes can prevail with men to such fixed resolutions for the obtaining of these poor, sorry things, which borrow part of their goodness from men's fancy and imagination, how much more effectual must the Christian's hope of eternal life be to provoke him to the achievement of more noble exploits!—*Gurnall.*

[14981] To the Stoic or the Buddhist, baffled and foiled in his struggles to break loose from the thralldom of evil, only one escape is left—self-annihilation. To the Christian, failure and disappointment, even in the pursuit of holiness, are an incentive to new exertions. His hopefulness can never die, for the mainspring of his hope is without, not within the soul. To him despair is an impossibility, for in the darkness that may be felt his soul casts itself the more undoubtingly on the love that never changes.—*Rev. J. G. Smith.*

[14982] Hope ranks with faith and charity as one of the royal elements of Christian perfection. We are saved by hope. Every man that hath hope in Christ purifieth himself as He is pure. The temptations, and sorrows, and weariness which endanger our fidelity, are, to be vanquished, not merely by faith in the consolations which God will now afford, or by the love which rejoices to be found worthy to suffer for Christ's

sake, but also by a confident hope resting on the promise of Christ, that if we are faithful unto death, He will give us a crown of life; that, if we overcome, we shall be pillars in the temple of God, and go no more out—shall eat of the hidden manna—shall receive the white stone—shall never have our name blotted from the book of life—shall sit with Christ on His throne, even as He overcame, and is seated with the Father in His throne. The heaviest of earthly calamities, the bitterest of earthly sorrows, the sharpest of earthly temptations, will appear to us light afflictions, and but for a moment; we shall perceive that they are all working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, if we look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal.—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

## 2 Hope triumphs over the fear of death.

[14983] The horror of death is nought but the rapid termination of hope! It is the dark barrier between us and hope natural. But hope that can span infinitude bounds over it, for, kindred to the Great Spirit, it will not be contained by space and time, which are the walls of our actual frame.—*Sir R. Maltravers.*

[14984] Immortal Hope . . .  
Takes comfort from the foaming billow's rage,  
And makes a welcome harbour of the tomb.  
—*Young.*

[14985] The hope of future happiness is a perpetual source of consolation to good men; under trouble it soothes their minds; amidst temptation it supports their virtues, and in their dying moments enables them to say, "O Death, where is thy sting?"—*Knox.*

[14986] Unfading Hope! when life's last  
embers burn,  
When soul to soul, and dust to dust return;  
Heaven to thy charge resigns the awful hour!  
Oh! then thy kingdom comes! Immortal  
power!  
What though each spark of earth-born rapture  
fly  
The quivering lip, pale cheek, and closing eye!  
Bright to thy soul the seraph hands convey  
The morning dream of life's eternal day—  
Then, then, the triumph and the trance begin!  
And all the Phoenix spirit burns within!  
—*Campbell.*

[14987] Daughter of Faith, awake, arise,  
illumine  
The dread unknown, the chaos of the tomb!  
Melt, and dispel, ye spectre-doubts, that roll  
Cimmerian darkness on the parting soul!  
Fly, like the moon-eyed herald of dismay,  
Chased on his night-steed by the star of day!  
The strife is o'er—the pangs of Nature close,  
And life's last rapture triumphs o'er her woes.  
—*Ibid.*

[14988] The world dares say no more of its devices than *dum spiro spero* (whilst I breathe, I



hope); but the children of God can add, by virtue of this living hope, *dum expiro spero* (whilst I expire, I hope).—*Abb. Leighton*.

### VIII. ITS GLORY AND BLESSEDNESS.

[14989] Hope! Who is insensible to the music of that word? What bosom has not kindled under its utterance? Poetry has sung of it; music has warbled it; oratory has lavished on it its bewitching strains. Pagan mythology, in her vain, but beautiful dreams, said that when all other divinities fled from the world, Hope, with her elastic step and radiant countenance and lustrous attire, lingered behind. Hope! well may we personify thee, lighting up thy altar-fires in this dark world, and dropping a live coal into many desolate hearts; gladdening the sick chamber with visions of returning health; illuminating with rays, brighter than the sunbeam, the captive's cell; crowding the broken slumbers of the soldier by his bivouac-fire, with pictures of his sunny home, and his own joyous return. Hope! drying the tear on the cheek of woe! As the black clouds of sorrow break and fall to the earth, arching the descending drops with thine own beauteous rainbow! Ay, more, standing with thy lamp in thy hand by the gloomy realms of Hades, kindling thy torch at Nature's funeral pile, and opening vistas through the gates of glory! If Hope, even with reference to present and finite things, be an emotion so joyous—if uninspired poetry can sing so sweetly of its delights, what must be the believer's hope, the hope which has God for its object, and heaven its consummation?—*John Macduff*.

[14990] Hope is our prolonged existence; it giveth us a double life; rushing over actual existence, we anticipate existence every moment; actual moments, with all their dark clouds that shade our joy, flit past us each instant like the rapid scud, signal of the approaching tempest; we fear it not, for hope loves to spring from the storm as from her couch. . . . Her roseate light is shed as universally as the light of the sun; but it is manifested in as different ways as there are various and strange tongues. Hope natural is the food of our moral existence; it is the oil of the lamp of life; it lightens up our path through the darkness of the clouds of the millions and millions of combinations that we wade through.—*Sir R. Maltravers*.

### IX. ITS CONNECTION WITH FAITH AND LOVE.

[14991] Faith differs from hope in the extension of its object, and in the intension of degree. St. Austin thus accounts their difference. Faith is of all things revealed, good and bad, rewards and punishments, of things past, present, and to come, of things that concern us and of things that concern us not; but hope hath for its object things only that are good and fit to be hoped

for, future and concerning ourselves; and because these things are offered to us on conditions of which we may so fail, as we may change our will, therefore our certainty is less than the adherences of faith; which, because faith relies only on one proposition, that is, the truth of the word of God, cannot be made uncertain in themselves, though the object of our hope may become uncertain to us, and to our possession: for it is infallibly certain that there is heaven for all the godly, and for me amongst them all, if I do my duty. But that I shall enter into heaven is the object of my hope, not of my faith; and is so sure, as it is certain I shall persevere in the ways of God.—*Bp. Taylor*.

[14992] Faith has three vast fields of expansion—the historical past, the spiritual present, the revealed future. Hope has but one of these—in that, the last of the three, is its home; but even there it is not coextensive with faith. Faith deals alike with a future of joy and a future of terror; hope, like faith, is the sight (more or less vivid) of the invisible future, but only of a future of comfort and pleasure, not of a future of gloom and pain. These characteristics give it a form and shape of its own, in which it occupies the mid place between faith and love.—*Dean Vaughan*.

[14993] Hope is allied to, but to be distinguished from, faith. Faith is the root from which hope springs, and by which it is sustained. Faith looks to the word or person promising; hope to the thing promised. Faith regards things past, present, and future. Hope only concerns the future. Faith looks at threatened evil, as well as promised good. Hope looks only to the wished-for good. Faith perceives; hope anticipates. Faith cometh by hearing; hope by experience and expectation.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[14994] It is said of Abraham that he believed in hope against hope. What is the meaning of these words? The passage intends to express that Divine hope overcame human hope. This is the hope which redounds to the glory of God, because it is an act of homage rendered to His omnipotence. Faith and hope repose upon the same foundation—the Word of God. The Christian believes in spite of the evidences of his senses, and hopes for blessings which cannot yet be discerned by the senses. There is no faith where there is doubt and uncertainty; there is no hope where there is hesitation.—*St. Chrysostom*.

[14995] Forget not that hope must go hand in hand with faith; and faith includes or implies that dull prosaic virtue which we sometimes find it hard to practise, the virtue of patience. The man that hopes can afford to be patient and to wait. Wait, then, as well as work.—*Abbott*.

[14996] Faith and Hope are twin sisters, and hardly to be known apart; both as beautiful as they can be, and alike beautiful, and very often

indeed mistaken each for the other. Yet this need never be; because between them there is this clear difference, that while Hope expects, Faith inspects; while Hope is like Mary, looking *up-ward*, Faith is like Martha, looking *at-ward*; while the light in the eyes of Hope is high, the light in the eyes of Faith is strong; while Hope trembles in expectation, Faith is quiet in possession. Hope leaps out toward what will be, Faith holds on to what is; Hope idealizes, Faith realizes; Faith sees, Hope foresees.—*Anon.*

[14997] Brother of Faith! 'twixt whom and thee  
The joys of heaven and earth divided be!  
Though Faith be heir, and have the fixt estate,  
Thy portion yet in movables is great.  
Happiness itself's all one  
In thee, or in possession!  
Only the future's thine, the present his!  
Thine's the more hard and noble bliss:  
Best apprehender of our joys! which hast  
So long a reach, and yet canst hold so fast!  
—*Southey.*

[14998] It is important to have clearly in our mind the distinctions and relations between the three chief elements of the Christian life.

Faith is the first in order of the moral Trinity in unity: without it the other graces could not exist, with it the other graces must flourish. Faith is the link between the sinner and the Saviour; the bridge from nature to grace, from earth and earthly-mindedness to heaven and heavenly-mindedness.

Love is the result or necessary fruit of faith. It is the Christlike spirit—the absence of selfishness, and the presence of sympathy—displaying itself. It is the heavenly and Divine life into which faith introduces us, diffusing itself.

Hope is not so distinct from faith as love. It is not the result, but rather the necessary accompaniment of faith in one of its two chief prospective aspects. With faith's survey of the past and sweep of the present, hope has no part or lot. In retrospective and present functions of faith, hope has, from the very nature of things, nothing, and can have nothing, to do. But as soon as faith reaches forth into the future, it needs the aid of hope to antedate its revelations, and to enable the believer, not only to gaze at, but to realize and enjoy in measure the blessings in store for the redeemed. In fact hope turns to practical account and discounts (so to speak) only without diminishing the future of bliss.—*C. N.*

[14999] Faith is the root, and hope the blossom; hope the daughter, whose mother is faith. Hope is faith in its prospective attitude—faith shading her eyes with her hand and gazing away into the distance.—*M. J.*

[15000] Faith appropriates the grace of God in the facts of salvation; love is the animating spirit of our present Christian life; while hope takes hold of the future as belonging to the Lord,

and to those who are His. The kingdom of God, past, present, and future, is thus reflected in faith, love, and hope. Hope is joined to faith and love because spiritual life, though present, is yet not accomplished.—*Encyclopædia (McClintock and Strong).*

## X. ITS RELATION TO FEAR.

[15001] Patience and fear are the fences of hope. There is a beautiful relation between hope and fear. The two are linked in Psa. cxlvii. 11. They are like the cork in the fisherman's net, which keeps it from sinking, and the lead, which prevents it from floating. Hope without fear is in danger of being too sanguine; fear without hope would soon become desponding.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

## XI. ASPECTS OF FALSE HOPE.

### 1 The hope of hypocrisy.

[15002] The hope of the hypocrite is like a spider's web. Like the spider, the hypocrite weaves his web, his hope, out of his own bowels. It is the creature of his fancy, spun from the materials of self-righteousness. He may call it a garment to hide his shame, but it is a mere web, unfit to cover a naked soul, and easily rent. He may call it a house, but it is unavailable to "hide from the storm or cover from the tempest." He may hold fast by it, but it shall fall, and he perish in the ruins. There is, there can be, no shelter, safety, nor security, in the cobweb of self-righteousness. If not stripped off in this world, it will be swept away by the first breath of eternity.—*Anon.*

[15003] A true Christian has ten times more to do with his heart, and its corruptions, than a hypocrite: and the sins of his heart and practice appear to him in their blackness: they look dreadful; and it often appears a very mysterious thing that any grace can be consistent with such corruption, or should be in such a heart. But a false hope hides corruption, covers it all over; and the hypocrite looks clean and bright in his own eyes.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

### 2 The hope of presumption.

[15004] The life of the unregenerate consisteth in presumptuous hope. This is the very foundation of their carnal security. So Christ tells the Jews (John viii. 54, 55): "Of whom ye say that He is your God, and yet ye have not known Him." The world is full of hope without a promise, which is but as a spider's web when a stress comes to be laid upon it (Job xxvii. 8). Unregenerate men are said, indeed, to be without hope (Eph. ii. 12). But the meaning is, they are without any solid well-grounded hope: for in Scripture account vain hope is no hope, except it be a lively hope (1 Pet. i. 3). A hope flowing from union with Christ (Col. i. 27). A hope nourished by experience (Rom. v. 4). A hope for which a man can give a reason (1 Pet. iii. 15).

A hope that puts men upon heart-purifying endeavours (1 John iii. 3). It is in the account of God a cypher, a vanity, not deserving the name of hope; and yet such a groundless, dead, Christless, irrational, idle hope is that which the unregenerate lives upon.—*T. Watson.*

## XII. CONTRAST BETWEEN WORLDLY AND CHRISTIAN HOPE.

[15005] Worldly hopes are not living, but lying hopes; they die often before us, and we live to bury them and see our own folly and infelicity in trusting to them; but at the utmost they die with us when we die, and can accompany us no farther. But the lively hope which is the Christian's portion answers expectation to the full, and much beyond it, and deceives no way but in that happy way of far exceeding it.—*Abp. Leighton.*

[15006] Does not St. Peter call the Christian's hope a lively, *i.e.*, a living, hope—a hope full of life, a hope that has not only life for its object, but also life in itself? Mere worldly hopes are hopes dying, or hopes dead.—*M. J.*

## XIII. THE "HOPE THAT MAKETH NOT ASHAMED."

### I Its objects or grounds.

*Christ and the glory that shall be revealed by His Second Advent.*

[15007] The actual object of hope is Christ, who is Himself called ὁ ἄρισ, not only because in Him we place all our dependence, but especially because it is in His second coming that the Christian's hope shall be fulfilled (1 Tim. i. 1; Col. i. 27; cf. Titus ii. 13).—*C. N.*

[15008] The supreme hope of seeing Christ is a hope that will never, never be disappointed. Many hopes we cherish that are disappointed; many purposes we form that have to be broken off. In fact human life is, after all, a pile of fragments or half-built towers; and there are few who have attained to anything like mature years whose hearts may not be compared to the graveyards, where lie entombed many earthly dreams, the objects of young ambition, as well as many plans and pursuits that we once followed eagerly, but are now ashamed of, or perhaps have abandoned to take up fresh courses altogether. But the hope of the Bridegroom's coming is a hope that will never fail us, a hope that we never need relinquish, and of which we shall never despair. As our life-star, it shall lead us on, like the star which guided the wise men, and never disappear till it actually brings us to the vision of Christ.—*R. W. Forest.*

[15009] The riches of heaven, the honour which cometh from God only, and the pleasures at His right hand, the absence of all evil, the presence and enjoyment of all good, and this good enduring to eternity, never more to be taken from us, never more to be in any, the

least degree, diminished, but forever in treasuring—these are the wreaths which form the contexture of that crown held forth to our hopes. Faith, like the dying martyr, "sees heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;" sees those who are already crowned, and have received palms from the Son of God, whom they confessed in the world. They compose a splendid and awful circle, beholding, from the height to which the Redeemer's favour has exalted them, the conflict in which we are still engaged below, interesting themselves in our success, encouraging us to strive, and to persevere, as they did in the days of their flesh.—*Bp. Horne.*

[15010] There is a hope of heaven, which is "the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast" (Heb. vi. 19) : it never miscarries, and it is known by four properties. (1) It is a hope that purifies the heart, purges out sin : "he that hath this hope, purifies himself even as God is pure" (1 John iii. 3). That soul that truly hopes to enjoy God, truly endeavours to be like God. (2) It is a hope which fills the heart with gladness : "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. v. 2; Ps. cxxx. 5). (3) It is a hope that is founded upon the promise : as there can be no true faith without the promise, so, nor any true hope : faith applies the promise, and hope expects the fulfilling the promise : faith relies upon the truth of it, and hope waits for the good of it : faith gives interest, hope expects livery and seisin. (4) It is a hope that is wrought by God Himself in the soul ; who is therefore called "the God of hope" (Rom. xv. 13), as being the Author as well as the Object of hope. Now he that hath this hope shall never miscarry : this is a right hope ; the hope of the true believer : "Christ in you, the hope of glory."—*M. Mead.*

[15011] The believer rests his hopes upon objects and grounds which will never cause him to be deceived or disappointed. The worldling's hope will fail because of the insufficiency of its objects. The Pharisee's hope will fail on account of the weakness of its foundation. The hope of the careless will fail because of the falseness of its warrant, "not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." But not so the believer's hope : it shall never put him to shame.—*C. N.*

[15012] Among the fruits and effects of the admirable love of Christ is a lively hope, a hope that maketh not ashamed, even of that glory which my Saviour came down from heaven to purchase by His blood, and the assurance whereof He has sealed with His blood. A hope, this, of a blessed resurrection after death, a hope of that blessed appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, a hope of that glorious sentence in the presence of men and angels, "Come, ye blessed," and a hope of an everlasting state of blessedness and glory in the presence of the great God, and glorified saints and angels, unto all eternity. And the efficacy of this hope in the blood of Christ brings us the victory—



victory over sin, victory over the world, victory over death.—*Chief Justice Hale.*

## 2 The Christian's joy in this hope.

[15013] The glimpses and tokens of future glory at present vouchsafed to the believer are of such a character as to lead him to exult in consummated and perfect bliss at the second advent. Does not the grand old gardener rejoice as he sits in the spring evening beneath his cottage door after the day's work, and watches the rich foliage and the luxuriant blossoms of the fruit-trees, promising heavy-laden branches of exquisite and delicious fruit in the coming autumn? Does not the traveller standing at early dawn upon the hill-top, and gazing upon the magnificent panorama, gradually disclosing its beauties—although only in part and indistinctly as the mists and darkness begin to disappear—rejoice, resting upon a sure and certain hope of the landscape to be revealed in all its perfection and splendour when the sun shall have attained and exercised its fulness of power? Does not the tourist—as he rests upon the ascended ridges in Alpine regions, and surveys detached portions of the scenery which present themselves to view beneath and around—go on his upward and wearisome journey with renewed strength, exulting in the extended and extensive view to be his reward when he shall reach the desired summit? And, in like manner, does not the Christian, reviewing and realizing the blessings of the present, exult in hope of the glory to be manifested in the times of the restitution of all things?—*C. N.*

## 3 The way in which hope may shame us.

[15014] Hope may put us to shame by causing us to be deceived or disappointed on account either of its objects or grounds. 1. The objects upon which our desires and affections are fixed may be incapable of affording us the expected satisfaction and delight. This may be due to the nature of the object itself. It may not be capable, in the very make and constitution of things, to bestow what we seek. It were folly to hope for food from a stone, or true happiness from riches. Again: it may be owing not to the nature of the object, but to some circumstances affecting it. Thus blight will devour the saccharine and starchy matter in the ears of corn, and so the farmer's hopes are frustrated; for the miller only returns him bales of dust instead of flour. Once more: it may be due to some circumstances connected with ourselves. The raging fever prevents the cup of water from quenching the thirst of the sick man; and disordered powers of digestion hinder wholesome and nourishing food from enabling a person to make flesh and blood. 2. Our hope will bitterly disappoint us if we seek to obtain its objects upon grounds which are insufficient or false altogether. Such is the case if we trust to secure an estate with defective title-deeds, or to acquire heaven, like the devotee, by self-inflicted tortures.—*Ibid.*

## XIV. ADOPTION OF THE ANCHOR AS ITS EMBLEM.

Aptness of the symbol, and its employment by the primitive Christians.

[15015] Because the anchor is often the sole hope and resource of the sailor, it came to be called by the ancients "the sacred anchor," and was made the emblem of "hope." By the early Christians it was naturally adopted, sometimes with regard to the stormy ocean of human life, at other times in relation to the persecutions and dangers of the ship of the Church. It is found engraved on rings, and depicted on monuments and on the walls of cemeteries in the Catacombs. The symbols on sepulchral tablets often contain allusions to the name of the deceased. The Chevalier de Rossi states that he has three times found an anchor upon *tituli*, bearing names derived from *spes*, the Latin, or *ἄνκῆ*, the Greek word for "hope," upon the tablet of a certain ELPIDIVS, and upon two others, in the cemetery of Priscilla, two women, ELPIZVSA and SPES. In some cases, above the transverse bar of the anchor stands the letter E, which is probably the abbreviation of the word *ἄνκῆ*. Further, we find the anchor associated with the *fish*, the symbol of the Saviour. It is clear that the union of the two symbols expresses "hope in Jesus Christ," and is equivalent to the formula so common on Christian tablets, "Spes in Christo," "Spes in Deo," "Spes in Deo Christo." The fact that the transverse bar of an anchor below the ring forms a cross, may have helped towards the choice of this ring as a Christian symbol.—*Anon.*

[15016] As an anchor thrown to the bottom of the sea holds the ship fast amid storms and tempests, so the Christian's hope penetrates the waves of this troublesome world, and reaches the eternal shore, holding fast his soul amid the waves of sin.—*E. Foster.*

## XV. HOMILETICAL HINTS.

### 1 Rules for the culture of hope.

(1) *It must be assiduously and wisely exercised.*

[15017] In hope we ought not to fix the mind upon the blessings of salvation only as one glorious whole, but also upon its various details. If hope be thus exercised, a spirit of hopefulness will naturally spring up. We shall be hopeful in regard to the future of the Church of Christ, no matter how much just cause there may be for distress, as we survey the horizon. We shall be hopeful, too, in regard to the spiritual history for those for whom we are specially responsible, or for whose spiritual state we are much concerned. Finally, we shall be hopeful as to our own spiritual condition if only we remain steadfast.—*C. N.*

(2) *Its reality must be tested.*

[15018] How many Christians there are who have a hope which lasts only until they need to use it! How many persons there are who are

able to sustain sorrow until sorrow comes upon them ! How many there are who trust in God until they have occasion to trust in Him ! Do you recollect the scene in Don Quixote in which the immortal knight put upon himself a helmet made of pasteboard ? That helmet being smitten and pierced by a sword, he sewed it up again, and would not part with it, but in his insanity wore it, and felt that he had an all-sufficient helmet on his head. Are there not many Don Quixotes among men, who put on armour that looks very well till some sword or spear is thrust into it, but which then is found to be like the pasteboard helmet that went to pieces the moment it was touched ? If we are to have a piety that shall sustain us in the flood and in the fire ; if we are to have a faith that shall be an all-sufficient armour by day and by night, the year round, and from year to year, we must have one that is made up of something better than mere pasteboard instruction or a paper belief.—*Beecher.*

- 2 Reason why a "sure and certain" hope is so rarely possessed.

*Because of the idolatry with which hope is sometimes regarded.*

[15019] Christians are very apt to make their hopes their idol. They think more of their hopes than of their holiness ; more of their hopes than of God. And God smites their Dagon, and it falls headless and with its lifeless trunk before the ark. They are more anxious to have the evidence that they are Christians than to be Christians. What if they discover no evidence ; do they less desire to fear God, and love His Son ? What if they "walk in darkness, and have no light," would they desire on this account to trust no more "in the name of the Lord, and stay upon their God" ? There is too much selfishness in such a religion as this, to be buoyant with hope. Such Christians are always thinking of themselves, and talking about themselves. Their hopes, their darkness, their experience are more to them than all the world beside. I have seen not a little religion like this, and I doubt whether it is possible for the human mind, in this morbid state, ever to possess the silent, strong, steady assurance of hope. An assured hope is not like the mountain torrent, but like a stream flowing from a living fountain, and often so quietly that it is scarcely visible but for the verdure on its banks. Nor does it cease to flow, though it sometimes runs underground ; nor does it less certainly find its way to the ocean of a blessed eternity. It is rarely attained in the direct pursuit of it. It comes in the pursuit of holiness, and in the faithful and diligent pursuit of every duty. It comes as the gift of God, with all the other graces that He gives, and is never found alone.—*Dr. Gardiner Spring.*

## CHARITY.

### I. DEFINITION AND NATURE OF CHARITY.

- 1 Charity is the fire of true love, kindled in the soul by God.

[15020] *Charity*, as used in 1 Cor. xiii., does not mean the mere giving of money to the needy, or the supply of their bodily necessities, but it embraces everything which goes to make up true friendship. It is generally defined as *Christian love* ; and this, be it remembered, is much more than natural kindness and generosity and amiability. It implies affection for our fellow-men, a kindly sympathy with them in their trials and sufferings, and an anxious desire to be of service to them, bodily and spiritually.—*J. N. Norton.*

[15021] Charity is the love of God for Himself, and the love of man for the love of God, which is best shown by helping him forward in the way of his salvation. No man loves God who does not love his neighbour ; nor can any love his neighbour truly who does not first love God.—*Anon.*

[15022] By charity we love God for His own sake and His gracious goodness ; and it is real friendship, being as it is reciprocal, and God's love is eternal, man's temporal. It is a recognized affection, for God, who has Himself inspired this love, cannot but know it, neither can we fail to be aware of His love for us, since He has published it abroad, and we know that whatever good we possess is the result of His benevolence ; while, moreover, He keeps up a perpetual intercourse with us through His inspirations and leadings.—*Francis de Sales.*

[15023] Charity loves God with so exceeding and predominant an affection that all other love seems nought in comparison. Verily it is a love which no human or angelic power can create, nor aught save "the Holy Ghost which is given unto us ;" and even as the soul, which is the life of our body, comes into that body through God's natural Providence, so that charity which is the life of the heart, is not of us, but is poured into our heart by His supernatural Providence.—*Ibid.*

- 2 Charity is the projection of the soul out of all that is selfish in self into the life and interests of others.

[15024] Love is the power by which the being passes out of the shades of night, and enters into the chambers of the morning. Love is the strength by which our own inner self-conscious principle emerges from the subterranean chambers of the dead, and enters into the temples of the undying. What are those temples ? Are they the majestic productions of mediæval genius, with pointed arches, fretted roofs, and decorated capitals ? Are they the fanes which Gothic architects have reared for the admira-

tion of future generations? Not so. The young, the aged—you in the prime of life, you in the declining day—you are the temples of the living God; and the heart of the Christian, when he loves as Christ loves, passes from his own subterranean chambers of selfish anxieties and deathly care, and enters into the living chambers of desolated human hearts. Love is the forgetfulness of self in the thought for the interests of another. Christian love for our fellows is the passage of life from its own narrow darkened precincts, journeying through the heart of Jesus the Redeemer, and centring in the heart of man. Such is the motive of a Christian—the love of man as man.—*Canon W. F. Knox Little.*

[15025] True love comprehends (1) a regard to the infirmities, (2) feelings, (3) reputation, (4) welfare of our fellow-creatures. As essential elements of Christian love there must be (1) the full recognition of a common humanity in all men, whatever their country, their colour, their language, their birth, or their condition. (2) The recognition of a higher relationship as the common offspring of God.—*C. N.*

3 Charity is the love which God has for us manifested in our love for the human brotherhood.

[15026] We must not explain this word as if it meant a weak concession to the opinions of others, or a blind eye to their failings. St. Paul knew nothing of that spurious form of charity which refuses to find fault with opinions however hurtful or erroneous, or with conduct however sinful. The word "love," which has been substituted for "charity" in 1 Cor. xiii. by the Revisers of the New Testament, perhaps gives a truer idea of the apostle's meaning. But even this word is open to misinterpretation, since it is frequently used to describe a love which, however pure, has much in it of exclusiveness and self. Perhaps we can best get at the true meaning of the idea by defining it as being the love which God has for us. It is that desire to give and to bless which is ready to bestow itself even where it meets with no response. This is the Divine charity, and it is of this that we are to partake if we would be filled with that spirit which is described by St. Paul.—*Canon Vernon Hutton.*

## II. DELINEATION OF ITS SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES AND CHARACTERISTICS (1 COR. XIII.).

### 1 Long-suffering and patience.

"Charity suffereth long."

[15027] There is a love, so exquisite in nature, so rare in manifestation, so God-like in power, that none who behold its influence on a human soul can doubt the Divine impression of that life which gives it birth. The cry may indeed at times be forced from its meek lips, "How long, O Lord, how long shall the enemy triumph?" but

it is *still* a SILENT cry, and "slow to anger, slow to wrath," the charity that suffereth long can yet turn at the same moment to kiss the hand that wounds. With face ever turned heavenwards, through each fire of trial and every night of sorrow, she but sanctifies the altar of her heart afresh, and consecrates the sacrifice of loving hope in "patient waiting for the day."—*A. M. A. W.*

### 2 Kindness and benevolence.

"Charity . . . is kind."

[15028] The winged animals mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel are represented as having under each wing a human hand. Here we have a type of the perfect character who not only soars to heaven on the wings of prayer, but holdeth out a hand of help and sympathy to his brother man.—*St. Thomas Aquinas.*

[15029] To advise the ignorant, relieve the needy, comfort the afflicted, are duties that fall in our way almost every day of our lives. A man has frequent opportunities of mitigating the fierceness of a party; of doing justice to the character of a deserving man; of softening the envious, quieting the angry, and rectifying the prejudiced; which are all of them employments suited to a reasonable nature, and bring great satisfaction to the person who can busy himself in them with discretion.—*Addison.*

[15030] When the veil of death has been drawn between us and the objects of our regard, how quick-sighted do we become to their merits, and how bitterly do we remember wrongs, or even looks of unkindness, which may have escaped in our intercourse with them! How careful should such thoughts render us in the fulfilment of those offices of affection which may yet be in our power to perform! for who can tell how soon the moment may arrive when repentance cannot be followed by reparation?—*Bp. Heber.*

### 3 Contentedness and generosity.

"Charity envieth not."

[15031] Nothing can be more opposed to Divine charity than the spirit of envy. Genuine love, as understood by St. Paul, can view not only with complacency, but also delight, the advancement, progress, and good of others, while remaining content with such things as it hath, although "such things" may be far inferior. The generous nature of true charity knows no emulation or jealousy, but is as ever ready, in its native nobility, to rejoice *at* and *with* the happiness and advantages of bright Hope's favourites, as to weep for very tenderness o'er the *protégés* of Grief and Distress.—*A. M. A. W.*

### 4 Modesty and humility.

"Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."

[15032] Pride and conceit are as far removed from charity as are envy and emulation. Its left hand knows not the actions of its right—it



never stands in the corners of the market-places to be seen of men—it never goes up into the temple to thank God for its own excellence, being all unconscious of its merit—it is never self-assertive in any way; but, like the floral emblem of humility, the coy violet sheds sweetest fragrance around while hiding, in beautiful modesty, the source from whence that fragrance springs.—*Ibid.*

##### 5 Seemliness and courtesy.

*"Charity doth not behave itself unseemly."*

[15033] The expression in the original is still shorter. Its first meaning is this, *is not shapeless, is not misshapen, is not indecorous, rude, or unmannerly*. A strange element, we might think, in the composition of charity! Not indecorous, not rude, or unmannerly—what has that to do with charity? Reflect a little and you will perceive that this also is no small thing to mention, and that it bears very directly upon the grace spoken of. In this, as in other cases, we see a thing best by its opposite. Have we ever noticed such a thing as indecorum, unmannerliness, rudeness, in persons claiming to be Christians? Yes, it is sometimes made a part of religion so to be. There are those who make what they call faithfulness the one virtue. They are so fearful of disguising their own convictions, and so fearful of encouraging carelessness or false security in others, that they run into an opposite extreme, and would obtrude upon the notice of every passer-by those truths or those feelings of which the whole value is in their depth and in their humility. It may be that there are some to whom God has given a peculiar power of startling others into conviction by a mode of presenting His truths which on other lips would be simply offensive and repulsive. There may be such persons, and He who has peculiarly endowed may peculiarly bless. But for others, for Christian persons generally, it is not safe to forget the special warning which Christ has given (in His own emphatic figure) against *casting pearls before swine*, or the remarkable feature presented to us by St. Paul in the delineation of the grace of charity, that it is never unmannerly.—*Dean Laughan.*

[15034] To ask a stranger, casually and suddenly, whether he is a converted man, whether he has the love of Christ in his heart, whether he is on his way to heaven or hell, &c., is the language of impertinence rather than of duty, with regard to which the words "doth not behave itself unseemly" may warn us that true charity doeth not so; knowing that, for one person driven by these rough means into the path of peace, many will rather be diverted and deterred from a religion so indifferent to the rules of propriety and good taste.—*Ibid.*

[15035] Depend upon it, courtesy, which is consideration for the feelings of others, will in the long run win more souls to Christ than rudeness. Where we are sure that courtesy is

genuine; not timidity, not time-serving, not a mere wish to please, but a delicacy of perception and a tenderness of feeling; there nothing is so attractive; attractive, not only in the sense of conciliating personal regard, but even in the sense of recommending godliness and drawing minds and hearts to Christ. I am not counselling silence at all times upon the concerns of the soul. There are persons charged with a ministry, who must be instant in season and out of season. There are affronts offered to Christ in the world, which require of those who love Him that they speak out, even to protest, even to reprove. There is such a thing as compromise. There is such a thing as cowardice. There is such a thing as being ashamed of Christ before men. And we know who has said that of such persons He will Himself be ashamed when He returns in glory. If Charity is not rude, neither is she cowardly.—*Ibid.*

[15036] If Charity has to guard against rudeness in the things of God, much more will she abhor it in the things of self. For one person who is unmannerly in Christ's behalf, a thousand and ten thousand are unmannerly, obtrusive, pushing, and impertinent in their own behalf. If it is wrong to be indecorous for a heavenly Master, much more must inconsiderateness and coarseness of feeling be repugnant to charity when destitute of any such excusing or atoning motive.—*Ibid.*

##### 6 Unselfishness and disinterestedness.

*"Charity . . . seeketh not her own."*

[15037] The courtesy of charity must not be selfishness. A man might seem to be mindful of the charge not to be unmannerly, and yet be wholly regardless of the next caution, that he be not selfish. "All seek their own," St. Paul complains, "not the things which are Jesus Christ's." How true a saying! How prevalent, how almost universal, is the spirit of self-seeking! When man, in the Fall, broke loose from God, he broke loose also from his brother. The natural man is not ungodly only; he is selfish too. In fact, it is only in God that hearts can really meet.—*Ibid.*

[15038] When we speak of selfishness we can only lay ourselves in the dust and mourn together. Who is not selfish? selfish in common things, in little things, in the things of every-day life? Who does not grudge trouble? or, if not all trouble, yet trouble of any kind which is not self-chosen and self-imposed? Who does not dislike being put out of his own way; having his plans for the day broken in upon; having his few moments of relaxation and refreshment curtailed yet further by some unexpected and unwelcome call? But we might go further, and say, Whose religion, whose charity, is not somewhat selfish? Is there any one who really desires, in doing good to others, their good more than his own? How many of us, in visiting the poor, are really aiming at

gratitude ! really seeking, if not the applause of lookers on—and do not be absolutely sure that there is not a little even of this feeling lurking within—yet at least the thanks and the love of those to whom we are ministering, instead of the result itself; the good, in soul or in body, of the person benefited or served ! In this case, Charity herself is seeking her own.—*Ibid.*

[15039] It is well for the world that charity should work in it anyhow, from any motive. And it is far better, even for ourselves, that we should be diligent in the service of others, whatever the imperfection of our motive, than not diligent. And we may pass through lower motives to higher; gradually purifying our work from the dross of selfishness as we go on and get forward. Still I think that it is good for us, both as an exercise of salutary humiliation, and still more as a means of casting out evil from our hearts and lives, to contemplate the diviner form of a real Christian charity as it is set before us in the pages of Holy Scripture : to remind ourselves, for example, that then only is charity perfect, even as its Source and its Inspirer is perfect, when in no sense it seeks its own ; when neither the desire of human applause or human gratitude, nor even the desire of self-improvement, much less of self-approval or self-justifying, has any place in it ; but the heart has learnt something of that most sublime of all exercises of self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice to which St. Paul had risen when he wrote the memorable, though sometimes misunderstood, sentence, “I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren.”—*Ibid.*

[15040] Just so far as self enters even into our best deeds, in that same degree we are without charity. And if the best of men have deplored to the end of life how wanting they were in the grace of an entire self-forgetfulness, may we not also apply the subject to some persons who never know what it is, even for a moment, to seek any one's good or pleasure but their own, and urge them, by the love of Christ, and by the hope of heaven, to practise themselves ere it be too late, at least in little self-denials, if perhaps a better spirit may by degrees be formed in them, and they may rise at last to something of that mind which was in Christ Jesus ?—*Ibid.*

[15041] “I will lend my friend this money, because, when I need, he will do the same for me.” “I will assist So-and-so to gain that post, because he will then be able to act on my behalf.” “I will give my bread to the hungry and my clothes to the naked, because I shall be more than recompensed hereafter.” Charity reasons not thus. She seeketh not her own.—*A. M. A. W.*

γ Gentleness and peaceableness.

“Charity . . . is not easily provoked.”

[15042] We must confess that the word *easily* is no part of the verse as St. Paul wrote it. Whence it crept in, I know not. Whether it was really felt that the rule was beyond human reach

without it, or whether some mere accident occasioned its insertion—these questions are comparatively unimportant ; but I fear that we must read the words without modification, *Charity is not provoked*. It is not said that charity is never angry. On the contrary, we read of our Lord Himself that on one occasion He looked round upon an audience *with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts*. And the same holy apostle, whose words are now before us, writes elsewhere, *Be ye angry, and sin not* : implying that all anger is not sinful. It is right to be indignant at some things : we may well wish that there were more amongst us than there is of righteous indignation at things mean and shameful, acts of revenge and lust and cruelty. St. Paul says of himself, *Who is offended*, that is, caused to offend, hindered and injured in his Christian course, and *I burn not*, that is, with holy anger on his behalf ?—*Dean Vaughan*.

[15043] *Charity is not provoked* follows closely upon, and indeed springs directly out of the foregoing particular, *seeketh not her own*. Selfishness, self-pleasing, and self-seeking, is the common cause of provocation. If we had no self in us, we should not be provoked, no, not once in a thousand times, as we now are. How seldom does provocation really arise out of a disinterested care for the good of others ! How seldom are we, like our Lord, simply grieved because of the hardness of another's heart ; simply concerned to think of the dishonour done to God, and the risk brought upon a brother's soul by disbelief, ungodliness, and sin ! Or, even if there be something of this motive for anger, yet how mixed is it with lower regards, with vexation, perhaps, because we can make no impression ; with irritation at the perverseness which will not see aright ; or with weariness in the disappointment of efforts to correct and to improve ! And how true is it, that when once charity is provoked, it ceases to be of any avail ; ceases to influence, because it ceases indeed to be charity ! Oh, if we would be of any use one to another ; if we would move in the world as Christ's witnesses, whether among equals or among inferiors, we must pray without ceasing for a gentle and a loving soul, even for that ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price.—*Ibid.*

8 Placability and simplicity.

“Charity . . . thinketh no evil.”

[15044] “Thinketh no evil” is, properly, *reckoneth not that which is evil*. In other words, Christian charity is shown in not keeping an account of injuries or of unkindnesses ; in not registering and recording acts or words of neglect, contempt, or wrong ; in not entering such things in the tablets of memory, as if for a future day of reckoning or of Divine retribution. Some minds are strangely tenacious of such things. It is in vain to remind them—in vain do they remind themselves—of shortcomings

[15044-15049]

and offences of their own ; in vain do we say, " Oh, bring not upon yourselves the judgment of the unmerciful servant ! Oh, provoke not God by your harsh, uncharitable, unforgiving spirit towards men, to remember your far greater debt of sin towards Him ! " Oh, be willing, when you remember how wrongly, how ungenerously, how suspiciously, and how contemptuously, you have yourself often spoken or acted towards others, to forgive and to forget a few such acts and words when they have injured or wounded *you* ! In vain, I say : for charity is the gift of God only : *Send Thy Holy Ghost, we pray, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity : charity is the gift of God, given by His Spirit, given in answer to earnest prayer, given as the fruit of many watchings and strivings, of many struggles with ourselves and many conflicts with Satan : no wonder therefore if they who ask not and believe not, are not charitable, do not love*—*Ibid.*

[15045] There was an expression in ancient times, denoting one of the great boons promised to the populace in a revolutionary crisis. That boon was called *new tablets* ; new account-books : in other words, the cancelling of the old ; the abolition of all outstanding debts. In that application, however attractive in its sound, however expedient at certain times in order to prevent worse consequences, it was not an act of justice, and it was a dangerous precedent. But, in the sense in which I now use it, it involves no danger, and, on the whole, taking one side with another, no injustice. If we have all something to forgive, have we not all something also to be forgiven ? Let us have new tablets ! Let us agree to cancel all outstanding debts ! Let us turn our thoughts from earthly dues to heavenly ; from things owing to us to things owing by us ; yes, owing by us both to man and God ! Let us start afresh ! Let charity reckon no evil : let charity destroy her old account-books, and forget the past ! We cannot deal with our own sins till we have done with those of others. *If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, or thou thyself (might we not venture to add ?) against thy brother, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way : first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* More than that we do not even pray for : can we look for more ?—*Ibid.*

## 9 Goodness and righteousness.

(1) "*Charity . . . rejoiceth not in iniquity.*"

a. Heinousness of the sin which this aspect of charity negatives.

[15046] It can be no charity to take pleasure in unrighteousness. St. Paul makes it the very climax of wickedness to do so. He can make some allowance for that human infirmity which, when it would do good, finds evil present with it ; but not only to do the wrong, but to feel satisfaction in seeing wrong done, to find a pleasant

excitement in reading or hearing of iniquity, whether in the form of ingenious fraud, or in the form of cruel violence, or in the form of successful daring—this is indeed the form of a mind far gone towards depravity ; this is the indication of an utter indifference to the honour of God and to the happiness of His Christians. No wonder St. Paul says, " Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity," for such joy belongs to him only who has neither the love of God nor the love of man in him.—*Ibid.*

b. Cautions elicited from the consideration of an existing state of mind which *does* rejoice "in iniquity."

[15047] It is not possible, it may not even be desirable, to suppress altogether in the daily history of human life the record of evil. A censorship of the press which should expurgate the reports of one kind, at least, of crime, in order to render it decent reading for the virtuous and the modest, would not only offend the English instinct of liberty ; it would also screen vice from the stern but wholesome lash of public opinion. It would rob virtue of one of its safeguards, which is the fear of deterrent example. It would contradict that wise and solemn precept of the apostle to a man charged with authority : " Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."—*Ibid.*

[15048] There are at least two cautions on this subject which ought never to be left unspoken. Records of crime solemnly judged, and terribly punished, if in any sense capable of corrupting us, carry with them their formidable lessons of consequence and of retribution. Even these, in all journals fit for circulation, are records, not of offensive particulars, but of reserved and reticent generalities. What shall we say, then, of fictitious narratives of vice, vulgar or fashionable, of tales of which the very point of interest lies in their immorality, of novels presupposing and taking for granted a state of opinion in which profligacy is the rule, and virtue the exception, in which modesty is made silly and ridiculous, and vice interesting, heroic, and charitable ? Can any reprobation be too strong for the writers of such fiction, or any prohibition be too positive of its tolerance in Christian homes ? The second caution needs to be spoken. Take heed how ye hear, and how ye read, in what spirit you look upon the crimes and vices of the sinful, what mind and heart you bring to the contemplation, whether it be the " considering thyself lest thou also be tempted," or the proud feeling which thanks God that he (the beholder) is not as other men are ; whether it be the wicked sympathy which gloats over the sin, or the Christian which bewails and weeps over the sinner.—*Ibid.*

(2) "*But rejoiceth in the truth.*"

a. Nature of the truth in [R.V. "with"] which charity rejoices.

[15049] There is here a bold double personification—Charity is one person ; Truth is another



Truth is rejoicing, and Charity, or Christian love, rejoices with her. The contrast here suggested between iniquity and truth might seem to give to the latter the sense of rectitude or uprightness, that sort of moral integrity which is the opposite of all crookedness or double-mindedness, whether of aim or act.—*Ibid.*

[15050] A comparison of two other passages will give a different idea of the truth in these words. St. Paul bids the Philippians to strive long with the truth of the gospel, that is, to join all their endeavours and efforts to those of the struggling gospel; and in his latest Epistle of all to Timothy, he says, "Suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God." In both these places the gospel is the thing personified; in the one, the gospel striving, as in an athletic contest, for a prize of victory; in the other, the gospel suffering affliction in a world of opposition and gainsaying. In both passages, the Christian body, or the Christian man, is to be the ally and comrade of the gospel in its struggles and in its hardships. Truth is, by definition, reality or the thing that is; and for St. Paul the sum of all reality, the embodiment of all that is, the revelation of God in Christ. Moral truth, intellectual truth, all meet and harmonize in truth revealed. There is nothing in nature, there is nothing in thought, there is nothing in virtue outside and apart from Him who calls Himself, in so many words, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."—*Ibid.*

b. Triumphs of the truth, and the reasons therein seen for the rejoicing of charity.

[15051] The gospel triumphs have not been few. Traceable directly to the influence, slow but sure, of Christian principles—of principles which had no place and no existence until Christ died—there have been such results as these: the elevation of women; the emancipation of the slave; the higher conception of the sanctity of life, whether shown in the diminution and greater mercifulness of war, or shown in the mitigation of a Draconic statute-book; the amelioration of the lot of the pauper, the lunatic, the prisoner, and the captive; the institution of hospitals for every form of disease, and associations for every enterprise of benevolence; the advance, let none gainsay it, of public opinion in its estimate of honour, humanity, and virtue; the improvement of habits, domestic and national; and the gracious and generous sacrifices by which education has become the enthusiasm of senate and people—its promotion recognized as a primary duty; its condition made a very test of a standing or falling State. Surely all these things, and a thousand others not included in that enumeration, show that the truth has rejoiced, and charity has rejoiced with her.—*Ibid.*

c. Tests of our rejoicing in the truth.

[15052] Our Lord said nothing but the words of soberness when He described the happiness of heaven as stirred into jubilation, not by large

triumphs of benevolence or beneficence, not by such infallible proofs as the power and charm of the gospel, but by that elementary, that primary work of individual repentance, which has of necessity no human witness. But it is not in heaven only, nor in this deepest and surest joy of the truth, that charity, which is Christian love, can rejoice with her. St. Paul would say to us, "By this test do you rejoice with the joy of the truth? Does it stir the very souls in you, when you see a worldly, trifling, self-indulgent life rousing itself to the thought of things above, beginning to remember other lives, to take an interest in Divine truth, to see itself in the light of heaven and eternity?"—*Ibid.*

10 Meekness and magnanimity.

"Charity . . . beareth all things."

[15053] This may either mean, bears in silence all annoyances and troubles, or *covers up* all things (as *στέγω* may have either meaning), in the sense of concealing or excusing the faults of others, instead of gladly disclosing them. The latter interpretation harmonizes better with what follows, but it is contrary to Paul's usage as to this word (see i Thess. iii. 1, 5). With him the word always means to bear patiently.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

[15054] Hatred disturbs the existing quiet by railings; stirs up dormant quarrels on mere suspicions and trifles, and by unfavourable constructions put upon everything, even upon acts of kindness. As hatred by quarrels exposes the faults of others, so "love covers" them, except in so far as brotherly correction requires their exposure. Love condones, yea, takes no notice of a friend's errors. The disagreements which hatred stirs up, love allays; and the offences which are usually the causes of quarrel, it sees as though it saw them not, and excuses them. It gives to men the forgiveness which it daily craves from God.—*Fausset.*

[15055] "Love covers a multitude of sins." When a scar cannot be taken away, the next kind office is to hide it. Love is never so blind as when it is to spy faults; it is like the painter who, in drawing the picture of a friend, having a blemish in one eye, would picture only the other side of his face. It is a noble and great thing to cover the blemishes and to excuse the failings of a friend; to draw a curtain before his stains, and display his perfections; to bury his weaknesses in silence, but to proclaim his virtues on the housetop.—*R. South, D.D.*

[15056] It is the bent of the basest and most worthless spirits to be busy in the search and discovery of others' failings, passing by all that is commendable and imitable. But the more excellent mind of a real Christian loves not unnecessarily to touch—no, nor to look upon them—but rather turns away. Such never uncover their brother's sores but to cure them, and no more than is necessary for that end. They would willingly have them hid, that neither they

nor others might see them. Consider thou often that love which covers thine, that blood which was shed to wash off thy guilt.—*Abp. Leighton.*

#### 11 Readiness of belief.

"Charity . . . believeth all things."

[15057] Love is not suspicious, but readily credits what men say in their own defence.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

#### 12 Hopefulness and trust.

"Charity . . . hopeth all things."

[15058] Charity hopes for the best with regard to all men. It would be contrary to St. Paul's meaning (1 Cor. xiii. 7, 8) to understand the faith and hope here referred to as pointing to the truths and promises of the gospel.—*Ibid.*

[15059] The Christian can hope all things, because he grounds his hope, not on man, but on God, and trusts that the same power which has wrought good in him will also work good in his neighbour.—*J. C. Hare.*

#### 13 Fortitude and endurance.

"Charity . . . endureth all things."

[15060] The word *ὑπομένω* is properly a military word, and means to sustain the assault of an enemy. Hence it is used in the New Testament to express the idea of sustaining the assaults of suffering or persecution, in the sense of bearing up under them, and enduring them patiently (2 Tim. ii. 10; Heb. x. 32, xii. 2). This clause, therefore, *endureth all things*, differs from that which speaks of *bearing all things*, the latter having reference to annoyances and troubles, the former to suffering and persecution.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

[15061] Know how sublime a thing it is  
To suffer and be strong.—*Anon.*

#### 14 Permanence and immortality.

"Charity never faileth."

[15062] Knowledge shall fail, and prophecy shall cease :

Yea, constant faith and holy hope shall die,  
One lost in certainty, and one in joy ;  
While thou, more happy power, fair Charity,  
Triumphant sister, greatest of the three,  
Thy office and thy nature still the same,  
Lasting thy lamp, and unconsumed thy flame,  
Still shalt survive ;  
Shalt stand before the host of heaven confest,  
For ever blessing, and for ever blest !—*Prior.*

[15063] It is deeply interesting, and I think profoundly significant, that it is this largest of all kinds and conditions of loving—not the love of wife or child, not the love of friend or brother, not even the love of Christian for Christian—of which it is here written that it "abideth," that it "never faileth," passing with the Christian victor into the heaven of his happiness and of his service above. It seems to say to us that there shall then be a universality and an unboundedness of loving, which shall count nothing and no one alien that God

hath created, or for which, conscious or unconscious, receptive or recusant, the Lord Jesus Christ poured out His most precious blood. The universal love shall have swallowed up then all human definitions and all human conditions ; the reciprocal love will then be large and ample as the originating : "in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one"—"God is Love."—*Dean Vaughan.*

[15064] Charity is eternal. Gifts, however useful or attractive they may be, fail. They are concerned with temporal things, and are in their nature temporal. The knowledge of art, of science, of law, must one day become obsolete ; although the lessons learned and the habits acquired in gaining such knowledge will be endless, the knowledge itself must cease when its subject-matter ceases. Charity never faileth. So long as there are our fellow-creatures in existence, so long is there scope for love. Even of those spiritual graces which will outlast all material things, charity is the greatest.—*Canon Vernon Hutton.*

### III. ITS VARIED MANIFESTATIONS.

#### I In brotherly affection generally.

(1) *In what sense brotherly love may be called a new commandment, and principle of Christian character.*

[15065] Though in one sense old, it was in another wholly new :—(1) In the new prominence given to it ; (2) in the new motives by which it was enforced ; (3) in the new examples by which it was recommended ; (4) in the new influence it was henceforth to exercise.—*Archdeacon Ferrar.*

[15066] Humility, with Jesus, is the lowly source of the virtues. The two connected words, repent and believe, marked the two polar duties upon which the new Christian type of character was to be formed ; but the centre of the whole is love. Love is the central and formative virtue of Christian ethics and theology—not the Platonic idea of justice, nor the magnanimity of Aristotle, nor the self-abnegation of Buddha. Love is the Divine centre of the moral ideal of Jesus, and around that living heart of goodness the virtues grow in their order and perfectness. It is an evident historical fact that Jesus introduced a new creative principle of character. Distinct and clearly outlined as the Christian character has been, and is, in comparison with all other types of goodness, Jewish or Gentile, ancient or modern ; so unique and divinely original was the first creative thought of it in the mind of Jesus of Nazareth. What science shall declare the generation of that creative thought of Jesus ?—*Newman Smyth.*

(2) *Its fundamental character and discriminations.*

[15067] (1) Brotherly love is based upon the evidence of a Christly character, and prompted by love to Christ Himself. (2) Brotherly love

does not require in Christians an entire agreement in opinion or coincidence in practice. (3) Brotherly love does not forbid Christians to controvert the opinions or reprove the faults one of another. (4) Brotherly love does not require marks of outward consideration towards all Christians. This love is neither a vague sentimentalism nor a levelling radicalism.—*J. P. Thompson.*

(3) *Its politico-religious aspect.*

[15068] The era of humanity is the era of the Incarnation. The sense of human brotherhood, the acknowledgment of the sacredness of human rights, the recognition of that particular stock of rights which belongs to every human being, is a creation of Christian dogma.—*Canon Liddon.*

[15069] The equality of men can only be accomplished by the sovereignty of God. The longing for fraternity can never be satisfied but under the sway of a common Father. Announce the sublime and solacing doctrine of theocratic equality.—*Lord Beaconsfield.*

[15070] I find two grand principles laid down, two great acts accomplished by Jesus Christ. One of these is the abolition of all privilege in the relations of men toward God. For this I can find no human origin among the facts or conditions of society prior to the Advent. Everywhere religions were national and local, establishing among nations, classes, and individuals, enormous divisions and inequalities.—*Guizot.*

[15071] When the words, "Unity, Indivisibility, Brotherhood, or Death," were inscribed over the doors of the houses in Paris in 1790, it was a ghastly parody of the universal fellowship which the gospel proclaims. For Christianity recognizes fully the two great principles, too often forced into an unnatural antagonism, of spontaneity and authority, because it recognizes fully the rights of each individual, and the rights of the community at large.—*Ibid.*

[15072] The law of Christian brotherhood declared by our Lord not only secures to each and every disciple the same rights and privileges in His kingdom, it forbids any relation between Christians which is inconsistent with their absolute equality before Him, and their fraternal love for each other. Perhaps the most striking illustration of this is seen in the effect of this doctrine upon the relation of master and servant in the Apostolic age. The Roman, unlike the Hebrew, law gave the master absolute control over the body of his servant, to sell, to maim, to put to death. Now, a master and his slave are both converted to Christianity and received into the same church. We know from authentic sources that converted pagans often accompanied their profession of faith in Christ, with the public and solemn manumission of their slaves. But sometimes legal difficulties made this impracticable; yet in that case the

law of Christian brotherhood insured the virtual manumission of the slave. To masters the apostle says, "Give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven;" and there is no respect of persons with Him. And to Christian servants the same apostle says, "They that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren."—*J. P. Thompson.*

(4) *Its grounds and reasons.*

[15073] This brotherhood of believers is founded originally in their common relations to Christ. Once involved in a common ruin and misery, partakers now of a common redemption, having the same supreme object of affection, the same ennobling aim, the same hope of glory, the same inheritance beyond the grave, and owing their salvation equally to Christ, they are linked together in those interests and affections of their being which alone are vital and imperishable. "This family resemblance among Christians, this homogeneity of character, springs from a common centre; and there exists as its archetype an invisible personage, of whose glory all have in a measure partaken."—*Isaac Taylor.*

[15074] The brotherhood of Christians is not the result of any policy, compact, convention, or concession on their part, but exists by virtue of their union with and under this law.—*Ibid.*

[15075] There is, and must be, brotherhood in the body of Christ; there only it glows with brightness and flows forth with affection. Men, be ye brotherly.—*R. Steel.*

[15076] Christians have (1) a common relationship to Christ; (2) a similarity in condition and experience; (3) oneness in aim, in pursuits, and in prospects; (4) anticipated union in the event of separation.—*W. Traill.*

(5) *Its motive-power.*

The constraining love of Christ.

[15077] When the sun shines upon the inferior bodies, if solid bodies when they reflect their beams, they cast their light and heat upon other bodies that are nearest about them; but if they be empty and hollow bodies, such as have no solidity, they take all into themselves, and reflect not. So it is in this case. They that be sound Christians, only possessed with power of grace, they cannot hold any goodness to themselves, but are ready to reflect it, and make others partakers of it. So must our labour and care be, not be hollow and false, but sincere and true, affecting the good of others as of ourselves.—*J. Smith.*

[15078] An Indian poet says of the Musa palm which, weak but flexible, bends under its vast burden of fruit, that it stoops in gratitude as if to kiss the mother-earth that nourished it, bearing patiently the stroke of the axe. See



there an image of Christian love! The love of Christ the Crucified is its source of life. To this source of life it bends down in gratitude its fruit-laden branches. It loves Jesus above all, it loves all in Him, it loves Him in all, it loves Him above all, in the poor and destitute, His meanest brethren, in order one day to receive the blessing of the King who shall judge the world: "I was hungry, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me."—*F. Delitzsch.*

(6) *The advantages of mutual brotherly love.*

a. It gives to the world the highest and most convincing proof of the reality and power of Christian faith.

[15079] The relation of brotherly love to the evidences of Christianity, and to its propagation in the world, is twice announced by our Saviour in His prayer for His disciples at the Last Supper: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me. . . . That they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." The evidence of Christ's mission, of Christ's Divinity, of Christ's union with His Church, of Christ's power and grace, the final convincing evidence of this would be given in the union of His disciples, made up from all nations, all classes, all temperaments, all interests, yet one in each other, and one in Christ their head. This was the demonstration of His gospel before the world, upon which, humanly speaking, He chiefly relied for its progress and success.—*J. P. Thompson.*

b. It makes Christians the more resolute in their adherence to truth and goodness.

[15080] How doth the revolt of any considerable part of an army discourage the rest; or if they be not entire and of a piece! Mutual love animates them (as nothing more) when they are prepared to live and die together, and love hath before joined whom now their common danger also joins. They otherwise signify but as so many single persons, each one but caring and contriving how to shift for himself. Love makes them significant to one another; so as that every one understands himself to be the common care of all the rest. It makes Christians the more resolute in their adherence to truth and goodness, when, from their not-doubted love, they are sure of the help, the counsels, and prayers of the Christian community.—*J. Howe.*

c. It heightens the joy of Christians.

[15081] Next unto the sight of the sweet countenance of God is the beholding of the cheerful countenance of a Christian friend, re-

joicing from true grounds. Whence it is that the joy of one becomes the joy of many, and the joys of many meet in one; by which means, as many lights together make the greater light, so many lightsome spirits make the greater light of spirit; and God receiveth the more praise, which makes Him so much to delight in the prosperity of His children. Hence it is that in any deliverance of God's people, "the righteous do compass them about" (Psa. cxlii. 7), to know "what God hath done for their souls;" and keep a spiritual feast with them in partaking of their joy. And the godly have cause to joy in the deliverance of other Christians, because they suffered in their afflictions, and it may be in their sins the cause of them, which made them somewhat ashamed. Whence it is that David's great desire was, that "those who feared God might not be ashamed because of Him" (Psa. lxi. 6), insinuating that those who fear God's name are ashamed of the falls of God's people. Now, when God delivers them, this reproach is removed, and those that had part in their sorrow have part in their joy.—*R. Sibbes.*

(7) *Means whereby it may be cherished.*

[15082] (1) Christians must cultivate acquaintance with each other. (2) We must cherish brotherly love by dwelling in our thoughts and speech upon the excellences of brethren rather than upon their infirmities and defects.—*J. P. Thompson.*

2 In the bearing of one another's burdens.

(1) *Import of the term "burden."*

[15083] Whatever makes right living, according to the law of God, difficult to a sincere man—that is a burden. Whatever thing within or without a man, in his nature, in his habits, or in his circumstances, makes it hard for him to live purely and rightly—that is included in this term *burden*. It may be in his mental constitution; it may be in his bodily health; it may be in the habits of his education; it may be in his relation to worldly affairs; it may be in his domestic circumstances; it may be in his peculiar liabilities to temptation and sin. It includes the whole catalogue of conditions, and influences, and causes, that weigh men down, and hinder them, when they are endeavouring sincerely to live lives of rectitude.—*Ward Beecher.*

(2) *Meaning of the term "bearing."*

[15084] It is, generally, such a course of conduct towards our fellow-men as shall enable them more easily to carry and manage their infirmities and troubles. It is a spirit of compassion and hopefulness excited in view of men's failures and moral obliquities, rather than a spirit of fault-finding and criticism.—*Ibid.*

(3) *Connection between this duty viewed as a natural and a Christian virtue.*

[15085] Not only is the bearing of burdens the common lot, but there is a sense in which the injunction about bearing one another's burdens is universally fulfilled. We do, naturally

and inevitably, bear one another's burdens. "No man liveth to himself." No man can. Each gives and takes continually, helps or hinders those around according to his own life. And life is such that every man must take some share of the life of those around. To be in relationships means this. To be in a family as head or member, to be in business, to be one of a social and civilized community implies this. We do bear one another's burdens, and the share of some men is very heavy. Then, what need is there of this precept? It is needed to make that Christian which is simply natural. It is needed to change hard necessity into holy duty. It is needed to multiply the instances in which it can be fulfilled.—*Alexander Raleigh.*

[15086] One of the peculiar excellences of Christianity is this, that it takes what is good, or what is existing in human life by necessity, and raises it into religion. It adopts certain natural sentiments, and puts them into their right place in the system of truth. It consecrates certain natural virtues by furnishing right motives and worthy ends. Viewed in this light, how pleasant is the admonition, "Bear ye one another's burdens"! It speaks to men who are all struggling and suffering together, and says not, "Throw off the burden, deny the mutual claim, restrain the hand of help;" but it says, "What you must do, do willingly. What you might leave undone, do more willingly still." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."—*Ibid.*

(4) *The sense in which Christ is the only bearer of our burdens, or the burdens of our brethren.*

a. As regards the burden of sin.

[15087] He took that burden upon Him at His incarnation; He bore it, and so bore it through a life of perfect obedience to the will of His heavenly Father, that He for ever bore it away when He finished His sacrifice of expiation and propitiation on the cross. The bearing of His burden none other shared with Him, and, it is evident, none other could share; for even He, mighty by a Divine personality, seemed in the garden of Gethsemane to stagger for an instant under the tremendous burden. He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him.—*Abp. Trench.*

b. As regards the burden of sorrow.

[15088] When we contemplate not the world's sin, but the world's woe, the burden of its sorrow and anguish, there is a sense in which He bore this, as no other has borne, nor could have borne it, fulfilling the words of the prophet. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." The remains of selfishness which are in every other man, which the regeneration itself does not in this life wholly abolish, cause that all others escape in great part the burdens of sorrow and anguish which He continually bore. In no other man has there existed a perfect love, and thus in no other a perfect sympathy with all the joys, and so, too, no less with

all the sorrows of our race; not to say that the limited horizon of every other man's vision prevents him from taking in more than a very smallest portion of these joys and these sorrows; even as he is able most faintly and most inadequately to realize even that little portion which he does take in. Of all men that ever lived, Christ, and Christ alone, stood, so to speak, at the central point of humanity. Around Him stretched the huge circumference of human woe; while from every point of that dread circumference, along all the lines which met and converged in Him, the voices of human pain and suffering travelled and found sympathetic echoes in His heart; along all the lines the throbs of human anguish passed, and wrung that heart, as though each several grief had been His own. That heart was large enough to take them all in, to embrace in itself all the sorrowful that was not also the sinful, which any child of Adam has at any time felt. The loneliness, the abandonment, the defeated hope, the despised love, the unfulfilled yearning, the torture of suspense, the suffering of the body, the aching of the spirit—He knew and understood them all. No cup of pain which had been lifted to any mortal lip, but that He tasted the bitterness of it; no depth of agony into which any human spirit had gone down, but that the plummet line of His love sounded it as well. This it was to be every man's brother, and as incarnate Love to have assumed the nature of every man.—*Ibid.*

(5) *The universally incumbent nature of this duty.*

[15089] Every man in a Christian Church ought to feel that he uses the power of the whole, yet never so as to take away from him the need of individual exertion. If we have experience, any brother has a right to come to us and say, "Put your experience, as a bridge, over that stream which I must cross. I want timber there to walk on."—*Ward Beecher.*

(6) *The varied modes of its exercise displayed.*

a. In recognizing and respecting the constitutional differences of mind, which exist among our fellow-men.

[15090] Much domestic unhappiness comes from the fact that people do not know, or do not enough recognize, the peculiarities of each other's natures. They expect impossible things of each other. If a flaming, demonstrative nature, and a cool, undemonstrative nature, come together, neither of them understanding or making allowance for the peculiarities of the other, there can scarcely fail of being unhappiness. The latter demands that the former shall keep still, and the former demands that the latter shall wake up. They are all the time actuated by cross-purposes, and are at disagreement with each other. No man has a right to say to another man, "Do you act as I do!" You claim the right to act out your own nature; recognize, then, the same right in others. Are

you talkative? Let them be taciturn if they will. Are you stern—not from unkindness, but from inevitable constitutional causes? Do you find yourself unmollified by gentle influences? Is your nature hard, like a rock, on which nothing but lichens can grow? But you need not use it to bruise tenderer natures. You are not to disregard their drooping tenderness, their yielding softness. God has appointed the tender vine to run on the rugged rock, and you are not to legislate to that vine, and say, "Do you be granite, because I am granite." Let it be vine, if God made it vine. As in the boundlessness of Divine wisdom, soft things twine about hard things for support, and hard things underlie the weakness of soft things, so it takes all things put together to make the great whole. "Bear ye one another's burdens," therefore. Do not make your own peculiarities a despotism, as if you were the only dominant nature. Men bear with you, and must. Bear ye with them.—*Ibid.*

b. In alleviating the poverty, suffering, and distress of others, or in tenderly dealing with their infirmities.

[15091] What simple, and yet what sublime, words are those, which in the gospel story we so often read concerning the Lord, "He had compassion on them." Let the same mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus. How often quite another mind is ours! There are too many who might be likened—one of our old divines, in his quaint way, has likened them—to the hedgehog, which, wrapping itself up in a ball, keeps all its soft warm wool within and for itself; has nothing but sharp prickly spines, which it presents to them that are without. And indeed is not this the exact image of the selfish man? And when I speak of him, I mean not some monster of cruelty and hardness of heart, against whom the very world cries shame. Oh no! the selfish man whom the word of God denounces is simply the man who will bear no burden which he can evade, who will enter into no sorrow from which he can decently escape. He may be polite, he may be courteous, he may be good-humoured; he may be even good-natured, where good-nature will entail on him no serious trouble; he may shed tears over fancied sorrows—yes, and over real ones, where they are specially adapted to move the imagination and the feeling; but for all this, self is the centre round which his whole life and being revolves. To keep things painful at a distance from himself, to draw round himself a charmed circle, into which these shall be unable to intrude, this is the aim and object, I may say the ambition, of his life.—*Abp. Trench.*

[15092] If you would bring people up from the lowlands, you must be like the Master and go down after them. It will not do to be afraid of getting muddy, if you want to help poor stumblers out of the gutter; and it will do no good to scold them for being there. Neither will it do to be too afraid of losing a high

position, if you want to help people out of doubts and fears and cruel unbelief. You may not feel quite so light and buoyant, you may suffer a little with them; but what of that, if you may be glorified together? Where would you be now, if Christ had not left His high estate and come down to seek and save the lost and perishing? What good would it do for Him to say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden," if He had not first lowered Himself into the sinner's place, and gone down, crushed and broken, into the earth under the awful weight of their sins? "He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be made rich." Some people are not willing to go where there is poverty, or suffering, or distress of any kind, because it makes them feel gloomy. Did you never think that all the load you get by visiting the suffering is taking just so much from their heavy burden? Your visit, and the interest it manifested, cheered and comforted them as much as it depressed you. Are you not willing to bear a very little of their heavy load? "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."—*Ward Beecher.*

[15093] You may go into a young man's store and find him discouraged. His countenance is clouded. Ask what is the matter. Tell him of your own early struggles, and how, by the grace of God, you got out of them. Stop on your way to and from business, at the houses of suffering and sickness. One "good morning" or "good evening" may bring comfort and heaven to a suffering soul. That is a good day in which you make some one happy. It is astonishing how little it takes to make one happy. Feel that the day is wasted in which you have not succeeded in this. Never put upon any an unnecessary burden. Never tell a man what mean things you have heard about him.—*Talmage.*

[15094] It requires far more of the constraining love of Christ to love our cousins and neighbours as members of the heavenly family, than to feel the heart warm to our suffering brethren in Tuscany or Madeira. To love the whole Church is one thing; to love—that is, to delight in the graces and veil the defects of the person who misunderstood me and opposed my plans yesterday, whose peculiar infirmities grate on my most sensitive feelings, or whose natural faults are precisely those from which my natural character most revolts, is quite another.—*Anon.*

[15095] If we could only learn, whilst dealing with our own infirmities as sins, to regard the faults of those dear to us as we would regard their affections, being as tender and prayerful over their spiritual as we would over their bodily sickness; or, better still, if we could look on one another's faults as common enemies; blending with our every-day occupations and pleasures the light of heavenly hopes and the



energy of heavenly aims ; praying together, as those only can, the inmost secrets and homeliest details of whose lives are known to one another —our homes would indeed become sanctuaries, our families, the two or three gathered together in Christ's name, where He is in the midst ; our social intercourse as hallowed as our religious assemblies.—*Ibid.*

[15096] It is a duty to bear the burden of one another's weakness, of those infirmities which are not sin, although only sinful creatures would be subject to them. "Support the weak," this was the solemn exhortation which the same apostle uttered on a very solemn occasion (Acts xx. 35). You, for example, may be strong in faith ; you may be able to lay firm hold on the promises of God in Christ, to cast the anchor of your faith sure and steadfast within the veil ; yet do not therefore despise, be not impatient with him who at every step is ready to halt, who is full of doubts and fears, who cleaves to his Saviour with a weak trembling faith, which hardly knows itself to be faith at all. You may think another full of needless scruples ; and perhaps he is so, and God may have given to you the gift of discerning things that differ which He has withholden from him ; or you may count him narrow-minded, and wanting in any large views of the truth ; yet bear with him, bear the burden which these scruples, this narrow-mindedness of his may impose upon you, as possibly a most useful discipline, which God, through this same brother, has provided for you.—*Abp. Trench.*

[15097] He says not "fulfil," but complete, that is, make it up all of you in common by the things wherein ye bear with one another. For example, this man is irascible, thou art dull-tempered ; bear, therefore, with his vehemence that he in turn may bear with thy sluggishness ; and thus neither will he, through thy support, transgress, nor wilt thou offend in the points where thy defects lie, through thy brother's forbearance. So do ye reach forth a hand one to another when about to fall, and one with another fulfil the law in common. But if ye do not thus, but each of you will investigate the faults of his neighbour, nothing will ever be performed by you as it ought. For as in the case of the body, if one were to exact the same function from every member of it, the body could never exist, so must there be great strife among brethren if we were to require all things from all.—*St. Chrysostom.*

[15098] It being impossible for man to be without failings, he exhorts them not to scrutinize severely the offences of others, but even to bear their failings, that their own may in turn be borne by others. As, in the building of a house, all the stones hold not the same position, but one is fitted for a corner, but not for the foundations, another for the foundations and not for the corner, so too is it in the body of the Church.—*Ibid.*

c. In restoring our erring brethren and sympathizing with their spiritual trials and difficulties.

[15099] We must be patient toward all men ; seeking, if they be overtaken by a fault, to restore them in the spirit of meekness ; not hugely angry at any discomfort or loss or annoyance which their faults may entail, while we remember how often and in how far greater things we have provoked the patience of God ; accepting therefore this which their sin may lay upon us as part of that burden which sinners dwelling among sinners must expect to bear. So, too, we bear the burden of other men's sins when we take trouble, endure toil and pain and loss in seeking their restoration ; when, at however remote a distance from our Lord, we too follow them into the wilderness, that so, it may be, we may find, and having found may bring them home again.—*Abp. Trench.*

[15100] The command about bearing one another's burdens is to be obeyed by imagining ourselves in others' circumstances, just as, before we blame a traveller for going slowly, we ought to lift his load, to see how fast and how far he ought to travel under such a weight. We shall find one Christian, for instance, who has been brought up without any religious advantages. How absurd it would be to expect from him equal progress with one who had had Divine truth instilled into his heart from childhood ! Another has obstacles in his way from the opposition of his family to all religion, and these form a hindrance of the power of which they can hardly conceive, who live in households where God is feared. Others, again, have strong passions and tempers which remained ungoverned for many a year before they became Christians, or evil habits which have long been unchecked, and it is not in reason to suppose that they will not have more to encounter than such as are naturally amiable and have ever been kept from gross indulgences. Some Christians are placed amid the temptations of wealth, others of poverty. Some never can be very fervent in religion, because they are not so in anything, but are constitutionally of a cold temperament, while others are all excitability, full of ecstasies and raptures, and perhaps of consequent excesses of zeal. Some have for their burden a body of pain and disease, some the cares and toils of life, some a fearful desponding spirit always leading to doubt and dejection, and some a levity of temper which is ever throwing them off their guard and leading them into inconsistencies.—*W. H. Lewis.*

[15101] How absurd it would be to expect from those in very varied conditions an equal attainment in piety, and how cruel to condemn one who lagged behind, till we had tried his burden ! We sometimes gain a better insight into the condition of some fellow-Christian, whom we have been in the habit of condemning as very inconsistent, and then we acknowledge that if we had had his trials, we should have

been almost tempted to give up in despair all efforts to live a Christian life. We know very little of each other's peculiar burdens. We should be less censorious if we knew more. A pastor has the best opportunity of judging, and a few years' experience in the ministry, where he is let into the trials of individuals more than perhaps their nearest friends, will make him sensible that great allowance is to be made for the circumstances in which each is placed. He ought to be the most charitable man in the whole Church with which he is connected, and though all its members should condemn some unhappy one, *his* heart should be the last to withhold sympathy. We are very ready to plead for such allowances for ourselves, and often say that we do not believe others could do better, situated as we are, than we have done. Why not think that others may need the same indulgences?—*Ibid.*

[15102] Even where we can see that others fall short of their duty without any real necessity, it is a case demanding our sympathy rather than our censure. You, perhaps, have made great attainments in the Christian life, and have much experience and strength; you see others who are, as you think, very inconsistent in their profession, entangled in the world, living luxuriously, or causing dissensions. Now was your superior wisdom and strength given you to find fault with and punish them, or to help and admonish them? "We that are strong," says the apostle, "ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak." Let it be remembered, as a rule, that if we have superiority of discernment enough to see that a fellow-Christian is going wrong, we have ability also to endeavour to set him right. To use our superiority only to condemn him would not be fulfilling the law of Christ.—*Ibid.*

[15103] Readily and heartily recognize and support the efforts of any one who, in a cheerful, simple manner, is endeavouring to do his plain duty. Such support may be given by words, may be given by resistance to anything like oppression, may be given by silently and simply copying the example. Whatever raises the tone of feeling amongst us, whatever contributes to make the right rather than the wrong the accepted thing to be done, whatever contributes to identify the code of honour, which will always rule in every society, with the law of God which ought to rule, is so much done in the way of combination for good. And such combination has power to save many an one from very painful falls, and perhaps from all manner of evil consequences.—*Bp. Temple.*

(7) *Motives or inducements to its fulfilment.*

A consideration of the frailty of our common human nature, and the uncertainties of human life.

[15104] You may be poor; you may be in fault; you may be in trouble. There may be a

great reverse in your circumstances coming on; there may be a great trial of your principles at hand; there may be a sad trouble in store for you. If it should be so, you may hope by Divine help to get well through all that comes to you in Divine providence. But you will go through such transitions and experiences very much more easily if by sympathy you have been in the states before. Suppose the morning come, when, writing to a confidential friend, you say, "I am now a poor man." But suppose you are able to think, after you have written that sentence: "This is not the first of my poverty. In spirit I have been with the poor nearly all my life, and more tenderly since I knew the dear Master who was homeless once; the condition is hard, but it is not harsh to me, as it is to many; I know how to bear its pressure, and where to find its sweetness." Suppose the hour of temptation come, and that, conscious as you have never been before of the moral infirmity of your nature, you exclaim, "Now I am tested indeed! but long before now I have put myself in the place of tested men. I have trembled with them in their trials, and never scorned or neglected them in their falls. Now, may the good Lord send some 'succourer of many' to me also, or stay me with His own hand until this hour is through." Suppose the day of dark affliction brooding over heart and home; but suppose you can say, in the sad talkings of your heart, "This, too, is not quite a strange thing. I have tried for years to comfort the distressed; many a time putting out the hand of sympathy to still, if I might, the tremblings of the sufferer, and now I am comforted myself with the same comforts wherewith I sought to comfort others." Consider thus what may be coming, what you may need, and how you may receive what you need with tears of thankful joy, as, under grace, the moral and providential result of bearing the burdens of others now.—*Alex. Raleigh.*

(8) *Reply to excuses for its neglect.*

[15105] Let no one say that he has not yet so far advanced in his own repentance as to be able to help others. Let no one say that he must be better before he can take a part, even a quiet and unobserved part, in making others better. On the contrary, there is no duty which may not be made the gate of the road to Christ. Begin here, and you will find that this way leads, where all such ways always lead, to your Master's presence. Do not fear that you are unworthy to serve Him, for serving Him in any way is the sure means to make you more worthy. Do not say, "I have myself to attend to, and that is enough;" for you cannot attend to yourself without attending to this. Look rather to see whether you have yet attended enough to this, and whether the want of attending to this be not the very cause that you are making no better progress in the purification of your own soul.—*Abp. Trench.*

[N.B.—The first impulses of Christian life are always generous. "Freely ye have received, freely give."]

**3 In the forgiveness of injuries.**

(1) *The obligations, extent, and standard of forgiveness.*

[15106] "Peter said unto Him, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him; until seven times? Jesus answered, I say not unto thee till seven times, but until seventy times seven." And when we have done this, He renders the duty of forgiveness infinite, while He says, "Be ye merciful, even as your Father in heaven is merciful." He meets us on our way to the throne to obtain forgiveness, and He assures us that, however costly the gift we may be about to lay on the holy altar, God is not to be bribed to do that for us which we refuse to do for others; that there is no access to His presence, no audience, nor hope, until our friendship for man is entire. He supposes us to have even reached the altar, to be standing in the immediate presence of God; He supposes the religious service to have reached that juncture when the Deity is actually waiting to receive the offering—what now can be of sufficient importance to stop the service? He teaches us that the exercise of forgiveness is that important thing, and that while that is performing, the Majesty of heaven and of earth consents to wait. And, to save His disciples from all reservation and delusion on this subject, He taught them to pray that the measure in which they forgave might be the standard by which God would dispense His grace to them, thus leaving to revenge no alternative but instant reconciliation, or the imprecation of revenge on its own head.—*Rev. John Harris, D.D.*

(2) *Its inducing plea.*

Mutual origin, experience, and mercies.

[15107] Bears not each human figure the god-like stamp on his forehead?

Readest thou not in his face thine origin? Is he not sailing,

Lost, like thyself, on an ocean unknown, and is he not guided

By the same stars that guide thee? Why shouldst thou hate, then, thy brother?

Hateth he thee, forgive! For 'tis sweet to stammer one letter

Of the Eternal's language; on earth it is called forgiveness!

—*Longfellow's Translation from the Swedish.*

[See Vol. III. ("VIRTUES, INCLUDING EXCELLENCES"), Sect. X., Art. 108, p. 170.]

**4 In gentle admonition and reproof.**

(1) *Nature and necessity of brotherly admonition.*

[15108] If I see that a brother, or neighbour, is pursuing a course which is likely to provoke God's wrath, and must issue in ruin, then it can be no matter of option with me; I must be altogether and grievously at fault if I "suffer sin upon him," and do not strive to bring him to repentance and amendment. Not that we are for turning you into general censors, who are to

run to and fro, and deal out correction. One of your indiscriminate rebukers, who thinks himself commissioned to lash every neighbour for every offence, is no better than a brawler, who himself needs the correction which he so freely administers. We are only concerned with the duty in the abstract; and we affirm it to be binding on us, both by word and action, that we strive to arrest the iniquity of others. It is bound on us that we do this by word, seeking to set faithfully before the offender the bitter consequences of his offence—invoking him by his hopes and his fears that he turn away from evil. It is bound on us all that we do this by action; so that if our station give us influence over the transgressor, we should employ it on restraining his practices; that is, to shame him down by the holiness of a counter example, or to withdraw ourselves from his society, and so show our detestation and disapproval of his conduct. And in this latter respect, perhaps, more than any other, has there been neglect of the great duty of brotherly reproof. The righteous have not protested against wickedness by boldly separating themselves from it. They have denounced heresy and impiety, but they have not been sufficiently diligent in digging the gulf or throwing up the rampart between themselves and those whom they profess to rebuke. They have not put forth the protest of a bold separation; they have not acted out their abhorrence; they have not made it clear to the world that they were really in earnest when they expressed a detestation of infidelity and vice. They do not break off associations with the offenders; they perhaps live on terms of intimacy with them; and yet one grand part of this much neglected duty of brotherly admonition is that we should "withdraw ourselves," as says St. Paul himself, "from every brother that walketh disorderly," and that we should register our righteous abhorrence of all that is profane in doctrine, and profligate in conduct, by freeing ourselves from those on whom the word of rebuke has produced no effect.—*Rev. H. Melvill, B.D.*

[15109] If the vicious man found himself thoroughly forsaken by the virtuous; if the heretical perceived that the orthodox left him to stand alone in his heresy, there would not be that indifference to reproof which we now find; but the outgoings of Christian charity would compel him to reflect on himself with shame, and thus bring him, with the blessing of the Almighty, to contrition and amendment.—*Ibid.*

(2) *Rules regulating its practice.*

a. Calculate prayerfully before you admonish whether good or evil is more likely to be produced.

[15110] We are not to think that because there may be ground for rebuke, rebuke, as a matter of course, should be instantly administered. It is but too possible that reproof may exasperate the man who receives it, that he shall be immediately hurried into additional



offence; and I have done wrong in reproving if there was good reason to expect that reproof would but make the man more guilty than before. The object of reproof is to put a check on wickedness; but if it seem likely that reproof will but give fresh impulse to wickedness, it can hardly be questioned that the reproof ought not to have been uttered. And this we take to be one chief meaning of that singular injunction of Christ to His disciples—"Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." If you meet with a determined and brutish wickedness, which admonition is only likely more and more to infuriate both against yourself and against your God, then deal not out your admonition, but reserve it for a more promising season. For if the duty of brotherly reproof is based on charity, it ought never to be given unless there be greater probability of its being beneficial than of its being injurious, for that indeed were a strange charity which should persist in administering physic when there was good reason to suppose that it would operate as a poison.—*Ibid.*

[15111] The holiest of all reprovers rebuked some in parables and dark sayings, "that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand," lest their responsibility and their guilt should be increased.—*M. J.*

b. Be well assured that the reproof delivered is prompted by a kindly solicitous motive.

[15112] It is very easy, but, at the same time, infinitely removed from all that is Christian, to upbraid the sinner in place of rebuking the sin. Whereas the rebuke should never part from our lips which has not the double object of love for the offender, and hatred of the offence. The brotherly correction, which alone can be expected to work its way to the heart, must bear upon itself the evident marks of having been dictated by genuine affection. If reproving do at all degenerate into reviling, we may look to have it despised as springing from carnal contentiousness, rather than received as prompted by affectionate solicitude. Remember St. Paul's admonition to the Galatians—"If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted."—*Rev. H. Melvill, B.D.*

c. Consult carefully both the time and place of reproof.

[15113] It is not the object of brotherly admonition to blazon forth a man's misdoings and shortcomings. A brother's reformation is what we aim at, not his shame and confusion. We are to remember that to give faults unnecessary publicity is probably to bring discredit on religion itself, and send into the world the influence of evil example, and to diminish that power of doing good, for when reproved, the offender might have paused, had not the notoriety given to his offence attached to him a

stigma which he cannot shake off. Remember, then, we lay it down as a rule, that privacy should be observed—"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his faults," said Christ, "between thee and him alone."—*Ibid.*

d. Take heed that you be not yourself chargeable with the fault that you reprove in another.

[15114] "Thou, therefore," says the apostle, "who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that teachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that teachest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that teachest a man should not desecrate the temple, dost thou commit sacrilege?" Indeed, we are ready to admit that the excellence of counsel is not really affected by the character of him from whom it proceeds. Advice, which would have been good advice from the lips of a saint, does not become bad advice because found on the lips of a sinner. Joab was a man of blood, and yet David would have done well to hearken to him, when he dissuaded him from numbering the people. Yet so it is, that in practice a man can always evade the force of reproof if he can fly to the taunt—"Physician, heal thyself." However bitterly I may inveigh against a fault, if I am not diligent in avoiding it, the natural inference will be that I speak of it more offensively than I think. If I would not "suffer sin on a brother," the best mode of rebuke is to show that I hate it too thoroughly to suffer it upon myself. Here, at least, the much abused maxim holds good—that "charity begins at home." If charity dictate the admonition, let it not appear that I love the soul of another better than my own. "Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."—*Ibid.*

(3) *The causes which usually lead to a neglect of this duty.*

[15115] They are (1) a temporizing policy, (2) a carnal reluctance, (3) a timid vacillation.—*Anon.*

(4) *Contrast between censoriousness and faithfulness in admonishing a brother.*

[15116] 1. Censoriousness is a Nimrod, a mighty hunter for faults (Jer. xx. 10; Psa. lvi. 6). Faithfulness does not delight to dwell on a fault; but censoriousness does.

2. Censoriousness is a mighty creator; it makes faults where there are none; it puts the worst construction on words and actions. Example.—The Pharisees and disciples going through the corn-fields (Matt. xii. 1, 2; Eliab to David, 1 Sam. xvii. 18). It calls zeal rashness (Michael to David, 2 Sam. xvi. 20). "For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded" (Psa. lxxix. 26). Faithfulness is discreet in its decisions.

3. Censoriousness is an easy believer, where he is not an inventor of faults. Example.—The

two false witnesses against Christ (Matt. xxvi. 60, 61). The people of Ephesus when Demetrius slandered Paul (Acts xix. 24-27). The Israelites when the spies returned and brought the evil report which the Israelites believed (Numb. xiii. 32, 33, xiv. 1-4). Faithfulness is not credulous; it believes not every spirit; but "tries the spirits."

4. Censoriousness is a kind of optician; it magnifies small things; makes a man an offender for a word; carries magnifying glasses with it. Faithfulness endeavours to mitigate the offence. "Charity (love) shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Peter iv. 8).

5. Censoriousness is a kind of crier; it propagates the faults of men where they are not known. Example.—Ham. "And Ham . . . told his two brethren without" (Gen. ix. 22). Faithfulness concealeth the matter. "Shem and Japheth cover a garment," &c. (Gen. ix. 23). "A tale-bearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (Prov. xi. 13).

6. Censoriousness delights to dwell on a fault. "Mine enemies reproach me all the day" (Psa. cii. 8). Faithfulness grieves and laments the failings of others. "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth; and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth" (Prov. xxiv. 17).

7. Censoriousness is very supercilious in its reproofs: it says, "Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou" (Isa. lv. 5). "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself; God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are," &c. (Luke xviii. 11). Faithfulness is tender of the reputation of others, and desires to reclaim and restore them. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself," &c. (Gal. vi. 1). "He that converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James v. 20).—*Wilks*.

## 5 In almsgiving.

### (1) Definition and nature of almsgiving.

[15117] Almsgiving is the genuine expression of Christian charity, the relief of human distress from a deep living sympathy with man's sufferings and sorrows.—*Dean Goulburn*.

[15118] Alms may be done not only by money, but also by acts. For example, one may kindly stand by a person, to succour and defend him, one may reach to him a helping hand; the service rendered by act has often done more good even than money.—*Chrysostom*.

### (2) The principle and practice of almsgiving in the primitive Church.

[15119] The primitive Church acted on the letter of the apostolical precept; and a trace of their practice is still to be found in that part of the office of the Holy Communion which is called the Offertory. In the course of the Liturgy (or Service of the Communion) offerings either of money or of food and clothing were

made by all members of the congregation who did not lie under any Church censure. These offerings were afterward divided into four parts. The first part went to the relief of the poor; the second to the maintenance of the bishop; the third part defrayed the expenses of the sacred fabric and its ornaments; the fourth was divided among the subordinate clergy. Indeed, from a remarkable passage of St. Chrysostom, it would seem that the early Christians never entered the church to pray without giving alms to the poor, some of whom were stationed at the church door for the purpose. So deeply was the mind of our forefathers in the faith imbued with the connection between prayers and alms; so thoroughly were they inoculated with the scriptural view that acts of homage to God must go hand in hand with acts of love of man.—*Dean Goulburn*.

### (3) The universal obligations to this duty.

[15120] It is proper that alms should come out of a little purse as well as out of a great sack; but surely where there is plenty, charity is a duty, not a courtesy; it is a tribute imposed by heaven upon us, and he is not a good subject who refuses to pay it.—*Feltham*.

[15121] The truth of our individual ability to have a share in raising the Eternal Temple is full of comfort and encouragement. The child's hand may mould, the poor man's arm may carry, the struggling widow may adorn, the aged saint may set in place there, some token with which God is well pleased.—*Rev. De Witt S. Clarke*.

[15122] Give strength, give thought, give deeds, give self,

Give love, give tears, and give thyself;  
Give, give, be always giving,  
Who gives not is not living.  
The more we give  
The more we live.—*Anon*.

[15123] If God has bestowed His gifts upon us in the greatest abundance; if He have filled our granaries with corn, and multiplied our flocks in the fold, but has not enriched us with that fraternal affection wherewith we should support one another; if He has not given us a bountiful heart and a charitable hand to give some of our goods to the relief, and some of our bread to the nourishment of the poor—He hath given us but half a blessing. Wealth is but a confused lump till bounty shape and put it into form; but a dead useless piece of earth till charity animate and quicken, and by sending it abroad make it current, and by distributing it to several hands give it heat and motion.—*King*.

### (4) The spirit in which alms should be given.

a. They should be given, not on casual impulse, but as a principle of duty.

[15124] At the close of 1 Cor. xv. St. Paul brings the duty of the weekly offering before the notice of the Corinthian Church, and urges

it thus:—"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." By this injunction the apostle evidently intended that the members of the Church should be systematic in their giving, and that they should give from principle, and not merely under the impulse of feeling. In this way he would obtain more for his object than he would if he waited that they should give all at once. The true rule of giving is—"as the Lord hath prospered." We owe it to Him as a debt of gratitude; and according to our prosperity and success, we should honestly devote our property to sacred purposes. And we should do this on the Sabbath day. It is right to do good then (Matt. xii. 12); and one of the appropriate exercises of religion is to look at the evidence of our prosperity with a view to know what we may be permitted to give to advance the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. If every Christian would honestly do this every week, it would do much to keep down the spirit of worldliness that prevails everywhere in the Christian Church; and if every Christian would conscientiously follow the direction of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, there would be no want of funds for any well-directed plan for the conversion of the world.—*A. Barnes.*

[15125] A man gives away a sovereign in Christ's name and for Christ's sake. Look at the elements which constitute that act and give it value. The man made the sovereign honestly; it is his, in point of fair service, by what is called right. If he keeps that sovereign he will break no law in commerce; if he will it away to his family, he will violate no law in social equity; if he spend it upon himself, society will not condemn him. Yet the man deliberately gives that sovereign away to a poor child, to a friendless stranger, to a Christian society. See what lies behind the deed. The man says, in effect if not in words, "The money may be mine, but I myself am not my own. How then can anything be mine, except temporarily, and under laws of stewardship and responsibility? I have no property in myself; I am bought with a price; I am God's agent. So far as I have given society an equivalent for this sovereign, it is mine; but the strength, the skill, the knowledge by which I gained it are the gifts of God. The image is Caesar's, but the gold is God's. I will hold what I have as Christ's; holding it so, I instantly yield it at His call, saying, Thine—oh wounded blessed Christ—Thine is the right!" So this giving away of the sovereign is not an off-hand deed; it is not done flippantly; it is not done to save appearances; it is not done from external social pressure; it becomes a religious act, a holy thank-offering.—*Dr. Parker.*

δ. They should be given spontaneously, and prompted by love to God and man.

[15126] Works of piety and charity should,

like water from a fountain, flow spontaneously from the gratitude and benevolence of a believing heart, and not require to be extorted with importunity, like the toil and trouble of drawing water from a deep well.—*Anon.*

[15127] Give! as the morning, that flows out of heaven!

Give! as the waves, when their channel is risen!

Give! as the free air and sunshine are given; Lavishly, utterly, carelessly give.

Not the waste drops of thy cup overflowing;  
Not the faint sparks of thy hearth overglowing;  
Not a pale bud from the June rose's blowing;

Give as He gave thee! who gave thee to live!

Pour out thy love like the rush of a river;

Wasting its waters for ever and ever

Through the burnt sands that reward not the giver.—*Household Words.*

[15128] "The motive power of all good work and good giving is *love*—a Spirit-wrought love to God, to God in Christ, and, as flowing therefrom, love to man." If we are moved to give by any selfish principle, by any idea of "constructing a ground of acceptance before God," by importunity, "or as a *solatium* to our consciences, it *profiteth us nothing*." "The real value of any act lies in the motive with which it is wrought." If we give, not merely from custom, or a desire to oblige, but from love to Christ, and an earnest desire to promote His glory, our offering—though it were but a cup of cold water given in His name—will be "as an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God;" and our Lord will attach to our humble act this eternal memorial, "Ye have done it unto Me." "Giving is not grace," but it should be one result of it, and of the sincerity of love. The precepts of our faith "touch the purse as well as the understanding, the heart, and the tongue. In fact, those precepts regard all that a man *has*, as well as all that he is; and it is by the use of what he has that we come to find out what he is." "By their fruits ye shall know them." We cannot see into our hearts as God can; and we may be deeply deceived as to what is there; but our giving affords at least one important indication of their state. "Withholding from God and from His cause is a sure index of spiritual poverty." "You see a man lavishing gold upon the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; whilst around him is a mass of ignorant, miserable, suffering humanity, for whose education, relief, and salvation he stretches out no helping hand. Clearly that man has *not* learned of Christ." How we give is a real test of our faith and love. "The highest and purest form of love is that which gives."—*Anon.*

[15129] Love ever lives beneath the cross,  
Ready for sacrifice and loss—



Still proving by this seal Divine  
That giving is love's only sign.—*Ibid.*

[15130] He who has conscientiously given one-twentieth this year will feel urged to give a tenth the next. The appetite for Christian liberality will grow, when it is healthily indulged, instead of morbidly stimulated. And that wretched feeling that every fresh charitable appeal is an exaction, would wholly cease, when we know that a sum has been set apart for expenditure of this kind in one form or another; and our gift would have that element of alacrity and forwardness essential to its acceptability; it would be given in the spirit prescribed by the apostle: "Let every man do according as he is disposed in his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver."—*Dean Goulburn.*

[15131] Think not you are charitable if the love of Jesus and His brethren be not purely the motive of your gifts. Alas! you might not give your superfluities, but "bestow all your goods to feed the poor;" you might even "give your body to be burned for them," and yet be utterly destitute of charity, if self-seeking, self-pleasing, or self-ends guide you; and guide you they must, until "the love of God be by the Holy Ghost shed abroad in your heart."—*Haweis.*

[15132] In some tropical land you may capture a sweet songster with gay plumage, and carry him to other climes, only to find him silent at your pleading. You have the bird, indeed, but have failed in that for which you brought him. So with this fair virtue of benevolence. It will not make music out of its sphere. The money is only its form; its spirit is not evoked at any summons. Now, as then, the voluntary offering is all that God accepts, who reminds us in our vanity that the world is His, and the fulness thereof; who would not tell us if He were hungry.—*Rev. De Witt S. Clarke.*

[15133] The worshipper who, by mistake, dropped into the charity-box a sovereign, and wishing to withdraw and replace it with a much smaller piece, but was prevented by the priest, and then congratulating himself on his liberality, was answered, "Nay, not what you gave, but what you meant to give, was all God saw," was taught a lesson which might still be profitably learned. To be seen of men, to make a creditable escape, to gratify a foolish fancy, is the secret of much that parades under a better name. The double blessing on him that gives, and him that takes, is being widely missed, since none comes to the niggardly benefactor. It is the free-will token of gratitude, the tangible desire for others' welfare, the concrete prayer for the enlargement and vigour of the kingdom of Christ, which is in His sight precious, be it much or little. The box of spikenard and the two mites are still famous, while the princely

offerings of proud spirits made that day are forgotten. The loving heart must respond where and with such as it can, knowing that "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."—*Ibid.*

c. They should be given with an ever-increasing spirit of liberality and disinterestedness.

[15134] The Christian professor too commonly allows his regular contribution to check his liberality, to prevent his giving more than the stipulated sum, though there are times when his benevolent impulses would prompt him to exceed that sum; then, he will regard his subscription only as a pledge that he will not give less, but as leaving his liberality open to all the impulses of an unrestricted benevolence. Now, he is too often disposed to shun the applications for charity, and if he is overlooked and passed by, to view it as a fortunate escape; but then he will do good as he hath opportunity—creating the opportunity which he cannot find already made to his hands. Now, his ability exceeds his inclination; but then his inclination will be greater than his ability; like the Macedonian Christians of whom the apostle testifies, "I bear them record that to their power, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves." Instead of being charitable only on comparative restraint, he will often anticipate application, and surprise the agents of beneficence by unexpected gifts; thus strengthening their faith in God, and inciting them to enlarge their designs for the kingdom of Christ: like the same believers of whom the apostle records, that, instead of needing to be solicited, they entreated him to accept their contributions—"praying us with much entreaty to accept the gift." Like the happy parent of a happy family, he will hail every new-born claim on his resources, and cheerfully deny himself in order to support it. And, instead of giving as he now does, as scantily as if he only aimed to keep the Christian cause from famishing, he will then act on the persuasion that his own enjoyment is identified with its growth and prosperity.—*John Harris, D.D.*

[15135] Give, looking for nothing again; that is, without consideration of future advantages: give to children, to old men, to the unthankful, and the dying, and to those you shall never see again; for else your alms or courtesy is not charity, but traffic and merchandise; and be sure that you omit not to relieve the needs of your enemy and the injurious; for so, possibly, you may win him to yourself; but do you intend the winning him to God.—*Bp. Taylor.*

(5) *The Divine principle of reciprocity and recompense which govern almsgiving.*

a. To withhold alms leads to forfeiture of blessing.

[15136] Dost thou impart none of thy wealth unto any? Then shouldst thou not receive anything from another—in which case the world

will be turned upside down. For in everything to give and receive is the principle of numerous blessings : in seeds, in scholars, in arts. For if any one desire to keep his art to himself, he subverts both himself and the whole course of things. And the husbandman, if he bury and keep the seeds in his house, will bring about a grievous famine. So also the rich man, if he act thus in regard of his wealth, will destroy himself before the poor, heaping the fire of hell more grievous upon his own head.—*Chrysostom.*

[15137] Let us proportion our alms to our ability lest we provoke God to proportion His blessings to our alms.—*Bp. Beveridge.*

δ. To bestow alms leads to the bestowal and increase of blessing.

[15138] The way to lay up is to lay out ; other parts of our estate are left behind ; but that which is given to Christ's poor is hoarded up in heaven ; that is a blessed kind of giving, which, though it makes the purse lighter, makes the crown heavier.—*T. Watson.*

[15139] A sum which has been reduced by giving to the Lord is not at all the same as a similar amount off which nothing has been taken for the Lord. "In the sight of the godless it seems the same, it counts the same. But to the saint it has not the same value, and, what is more, it has not the same value in the sight of God."—*J. Forbes Moncrieff.*

[15140] If a man has oil in his can, every drop he pours out makes his supply one drop less. There is no springing up from the bottom to prevent diminution in the supply. It is not so with the soul. The nature of that is to renew its supply, so that the more you draw from it, the more there is to draw ; the more it gives, the more it has to give. Giving will make any man's soul richer.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[15141] If you enjoy wealth alone, you have lost it ; for you will not reap its reward. But if you possess it jointly with the rest, then will it be more your own, and then will you reap the benefit of it. Seest thou not that the hands minister and the mouth softens, and the stomach receives ? Doth the stomach say, Since I have received I ought to keep it all ? Then do not thou, I pray, in regard to riches, use this language. For it belongs to the receiver to impart.—*Chrysostom.*

[15142] If this be good counsel, let us not be slow in taking heed to it ; and if what we have must be transported, let us transport it into that place from whence we cannot lose it. What are the poor to whom we give but our carriers, by whom we convey our goods from earth to heaven ? Give, then ; thou art but giving to thy carrier ; he carrieth what thou givest to heaven. How, sayest thou, does he carry it to heaven ? What ! hast thou forgotten, "Come ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom ; for I was **an** hungred and ye gave Me meat ;" and,

"Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of Mine, ye did it to Me" ? If thou hast not despised the beggar that standest before thee, consider to whom what thou gavest him hath come. "Inasmuch," saith He, "as ye did it to the least of one of Mine, ye did it unto Me." He hath received it, who gave thee wherewith to give. He hath received it, who in the end will give His own self to thee.—*Augustine.*

(6) *The measure of our giving.*

[15143] The law of giving a tenth to God would appear to be not merely Levitical, but "a far older rule, running all through the Bible" (see Gen. xiv. 20, xxviii. 22 ; Heb. vii. 1-10). "Under the old dispensation the Jews were only required to care for their own nation ; but under the new dispensation the command is, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.'" Therefore a *tenth* is, in most cases, little for Christians to give. It might almost be said that a *tenth* is the *very least* that a disciple of Christ ought to give. Over and above that, he should give as God prospers him. "Inasmuch as gospel privileges, gospel light, gospel liberty, far surpass those under the dim and shadowy dispensation of law, so the gifts of God's people ought to surpass those formerly rendered to Him." If God is pleased to increase our means, we must at once proportionately increase our offerings. "The tenth in straitened circumstances may be *much* to give, while the tenth in prosperity may be *very little*." God looks to what is left behind, as well as what is given away ; and He may see that the "much" given bears no proportion to the *much still retained*. "If we want to know how much the Lord has prospered us, let us ask ourselves how much we have got that God could take away."—*J. Forbes Moncrieff.*

[15144] Good wishes and approving words bring down no scales which turn with deeds. "Most men," said Sidney Smith, "are ready to act the good Samaritan, *without* the oil and the two pence." And so in this service they do but look, and pour in very little oil or wine, though they have enough of both. A five-cent bit poorly represents fifty thousand dollars, and yet in the Lord's treasury there is apt to be a plethora of them. The baser metals are surely rightly named. "Some give of their means and some of their meanness," said one. But what a shame it is that stewards of the King should deal so penuriously with Him, who has entrusted all to them ; nor is it strange that once, at least, he who grasped at both riches and a pious name, should have been exposed in all his sin, as Ananias fell down and gave up the ghost.—*Rev. De Witt S. Clarke.*

(7) *Spurious and defective forms of almsgiving.*

[15145] He that shall build an almshouse or hospital with goods ill gotten displays the ensign of his pride, and sets up the monument of his shame.—*T. Watson.*

[15146] There must be no affectation of kindness to the poor, even as there must be no fawning flattery of the great.—*A. A. Bonar.*

[15147] He that gives grievously gives grudgingly; it is not a gift, but a tax; charity must flow like spring water; the heart must be the spring, the hand the pipe, the poor the cistern; God loves a cheerful giver. Be not like the crab, which hath all the verjuice squeezed and pressed out. You must not give to the poor as if you were delivering your purse on the highway: charity without alacrity is rather a fine than an offering; 'tis rather doing of penance than giving of alms; charity must be like the myrrh which drops from the tree without cutting or forcing.—*T. Watson.*

[15148] If you give a little silver, you think as much of it as if you had laid out all you have, not knowing that not the giving, but the giving liberally, this is true almsgiving. Wherefore also it is not those simply who give whom the prophet proclaims and calls happy, but those who bestow liberally. For he doth not say simply, He hath given, but what? he hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor. For what profit is it, when out of it thou givest as it were a glass of water out of the sea? and even a widow woman's magnanimity is beyond thy emulation.—*Chrysostom.*

(8) *Lessons to be gathered from God's way of giving.*

[15149] Observe three things in God's giving: (1) He is not weary of giving; the springs of mercy are ever running. God did not only dispense blessings in former ages, but He still gives gifts to us, as the sun not only enriches the world with its morning light, but keeps light for the meridian. The honeycomb of God's bounty is still dropping. (2) God delights in giving; "He delighteth in mercy." (3) God gives to His very enemies. Who will send in provisions to his enemy? Men used to spread nets for their enemies; God spreads a table. The dew drops on the thistle as well as the rose; the dew of God's bounty drops upon the worst.—*T. Watson.*

(9) *Lessons taught by the gift of the woman with the alabaster box in regard to the disposition of the giver.*

[15150] "She hath done what she could." The costliness of her gift in proportion to her means, while it was nothing to Him she would honour, was a guarantee that she was not trifling. Had it been far less than it was, and had it been all she could bring, His blessing would have been the same. For He does not say, "Stop, consider, this alabaster box really cost a good deal of money; it could not have been bought for less than three hundred denarii." No; but He says, "She hath done what she could;" that is, she hath demonstrated the deep and tender attachment of her soul. She believes on her Lord. She loves the Saviour for His holiness, His mercy, His Divine benignity.

One penny's worth, if it is only the utmost that self-denial can do, is as good for that as ten thousand shekels. Did He not declare as much in what He said of the two mites that the poor widow cast into the temple treasury? Nay, did He not equally accept, and bless with the same favour, another woman, poorer and frailer still, who had nothing to give Him but tears and kisses for His feet? The whole spiritual meaning of gifts consists in the disposition of the giver. Distinctions of weight and measure, standards of currency, tables of value, rates of exchange, calculations of outlay, colour, material, and shape, vanish before that simple and royal touchstone in the breast. It is felt to be so, even in the presents of human friendship; and spiritual sincerity does not pass for less in the eyes of Him who searches and sees the heart.—*F. D. Huntington, D.D.*

(10) *Lessons taught by the correlation between prayer and almsgiving respecting the character of the latter practice.*

[15151] Alms and prayers are co-ordinate exercises of piety; they are both of them offerings to God; and as, in the one case, we must be careful not to rob God of the time and the mental effort, so, in the other, we must be equally careful not to rob Him of the gold and silver, which are His due. A portion of our time must be fenced round from the intrusion of worldly cares and secular business, if we are to discharge God's claims upon us. And on the same principle a portion of our substance must be regarded as a sacred treasury, not to be invaded by our own necessities, much less by our self-indulgence and love of luxury.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[15152] If truth must be said, we have been occasionally somewhat suspicious of almsgiving. In the term itself we have fancied we heard a legal ring, as if it were not genuine gospel coin; and some of us, it may be, have secretly regarded those happy characters, who are profuse and munificent in relieving the distress of others, as seeking to be justified by the works of the law and not by the faith of Christ. But this correlation between prayer and alms puts the subject in a new light. Almsgiving need be no more a work of human merit than prayer is. Neither almsgiving nor prayer can justify the sinner. No almsgiving, however profuse, and no prayer, however fervent, can wipe away a single stain of guilt from the soul. That is the special and exclusive prerogative of the blood of Christ's atonement. But both prayer and almsgiving—the one as well as the other—"come up for a memorial for God," when offered to Him in faith, even in such imperfect and inchoate faith as that of Cornelius must have been, before he heard the preaching of the gospel from the Apostle Peter.—*Ibid.*

[15153] Since every devout prayer is designed to ascend and fly up to heaven; as fasting, according to St. Austin's allusion, has given it one wing, so let almsgiving to the poor supply it



with another. And both these together will not only carry it up triumphant to heaven; but, if need require, bring heaven itself down to the devout person who sends it thither; as while Cornelius was fasting and praying, to which he still joined giving alms, an angel from heaven was despatched to him with this happy message (Acts x. 4): "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." And nothing certainly can give a greater efficacy to prayer and a more peculiar fitness for the sacrament, than a hearty and conscientious practice of this duty; without which all (else) is nothing but wind and air, pageantry and hypocrisy; for if there be any truer measure of a man than by what he does, it must be by what he gives. He who is truly pious will account it a wedding supper to feed the hungry, and a wedding garment to clothe the naked.—*R. South, D.D.*

(11) *Thoughts suggested by the widow's alms as to the true glory attaching to the spirit of genuine benevolence.*

[15154] These, which she noiselessly dropped into the treasury of the temple, deserved more attention than the stones and ornaments of the temple itself. It was not a mite, but an invisible act of the mind which the alms had made visible. There was something great in this action, greater than the temple with its stairs, its peristyles, its arches, and colossal walls. And, indeed, all comparison is injurious; for between the luxurious prince, who built this house out of the superabundance of his treasure, or the sweat of his subjects slowly transformed into gold, and this poor woman, stealthily throwing in the treasury a tribute levied from her misery—"her whole living," says Christ, what a difference! How great the poor woman! how little the monarch!—*Prof. Vinet.*

[Between the ordinarily human and the Divine view of almsgiving there is a wide difference. The earthly arithmetics reckon up the collection, making the gold more valuable than the copper; yet in God's sight often the copper is regarded as gold, and the gold as copper.]

#### IV. ITS UNIVERSAL OBLIGATIONS AND NECESSITY.

[15155] Charity is a universal duty, which it is in every man's power sometimes to practise; since every degree of assistance given to another, upon proper motives, is an act of charity; and there is scarcely any man in such a state of imbecility, as that he may not, on some occasions, benefit his neighbour. He that cannot relieve the poor may instruct the ignorant, and he that cannot attend the sick may reclaim the vicious. He that can give little assistance himself may yet perform the duty of charity by inflaming the ardour of others, and recommending the petitions which he cannot grant to those who have more to bestow. The widow that shall give her mite to the treasury, the poor man who shall bring to the thirsty a cup of cold water, shall not lose their reward.—*Johnson.*

#### V. ITS PRE-EMINENCE AS REGARDS THE SISTER GRACES.

- x Harmony of the apostolic utterances concerning the supremacy of charity, and the peculiar eloquence and beauty of St. Paul's description.

[15156] It is worthy of note that the three great doctrinal writers of the New Testament, St. Paul, St. John, and St. Peter, all agree in teaching that the highest of all Christian graces is the grace of charity, or love. We are not surprised that such should be the teaching of St. John. He had lain in the bosom of his Master, and had been peculiarly favoured by His love. He had drunk more deeply than any man of His Spirit. That St. Peter should propound the same truth, we should hardly have expected. From his natural character we should have imagined that *zeal* would have been in his estimation the most important of Christian graces. Or that, calling to mind an experience which could never have been absent from his thoughts, he would have insisted upon the absolute necessity of *humility* for the development of the Christian life. But he also, while he cannot be forgetful that God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. v. 5), bids his readers "have above all things fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Pet. iv. 8). And in his delineation of Christian progress he bids them add one grace to another until they reach the height of love (2 Pet. ii. 4-8). Much more may we with reason be surprised when we find that St. Paul's teaching is in exact harmony with St. John and St. Peter in this matter. The theological grace we most naturally connect with his name is that of *faith*. It is the great truth that he was specially raised up to teach, that the just shall live by faith. He lives in the unseen. His whole mind is absorbed by the thought of the Divine power working for him and in him. This faith gives him a strength beyond that of man. In the light of faith he views with some sternness the weaknesses and failures of our human nature. And yet it is from St. Paul that there is given to the world this most exquisite description of the pre-eminence of charity.—*Canon Vernon Hutton.*

[15157] I doubt whether words more full of chastened eloquence have ever proceeded from human utterance than are to be found in this chapter, 1 Cor. xiii. It is the eloquence of the heart as well as of the head. It is a human utterance inspired by the Divine Spirit. It is one of those fragments which seem almost to set themselves to music. Once heard, it is never forgotten. Once read, it will be re-read over and over again, for its fulness is inexhaustible. It is a prose poem unequalled for thought or diction. It comes, as is most worthy of observation, in the very middle of a controversial exposition which had been occasioned by a dispute which had arisen in the Corinthian Church. Its presence in such a position is

itself an illustration of the eternity of that charity of which it treats.—*Ibid.*

**2 Reasons for the supreme position assigned to charity.**

(1) *Because it is the grace most like God Himself.*

[15158] Why is charity the greatest of Christian graces? Why is it greater than all gifts? In what sense is it greater than faith and hope? In the first place, because *God is love*. Such is St. John's definition of God. Who of human beings has been nearer to God than he was? God is ever going forth in blessing. In creation, God is love. He goes forth that He may bestow life. In grace, God is love. By the Eternal Son, He redeems and rescues. In glory, God is love. He bestows upon His creatures some attributes of His own. God can receive nothing that can add to His greatness. All that He does is in a pouring forth of love. The Father is Love, the Son is Love, the Holy Ghost is Love; and yet not three Loves, but one Love. God is just, is true, is patient, is unchanging, is all-powerful. These are all parts of His love. Without these He would not be perfect love.—*Ibid.*

(2) *Because it is the crown, completion, and highest adornment of Christian character.*

[15159] Charity is the crowning grace of faith and hope, and queen-like sheds its sweetness over the whole soul, making it to be beautiful and acceptable to Divine Goodness; so that if the soul be a kingdom of which the Holy Spirit is King, charity is there to be found as "a queen in a vesture of gold wrought about with divers colours." If the soul be the regal consort of our Heavenly King, charity is as the royal crown upon her head; or if the soul and body together are as a little world, charity is the sun which warms, vivifies, and embellishes the whole.—*Francis de Sales.*

[15160] Love is the great central light of the soul about which all the virtues revolve.—*Fletcher.*

[15161] Love is the chain that binds us to the throne of God, each to all and all to each. May its golden links be strengthened! Gift to be coveted above all others, rather than eloquence lofty as angels' speech, than power to pluck mountains from their roots and cast them into the boiling sea, than knowledge that penetrates into the deepest mysteries and climbs to the heights of heaven, than the courage that wins the martyr's crown at a burning stake, than the faith that tramples death beneath its feet, than the hope that, stretched on a dying bed, lays a mortal hand on an immortal crown, rather far than these, give me the love that dwells, dove-like, in many a lowly bosom, and turns the rudest cabin into a little heaven. St. Paul crowns her queen; and so I say, with this apostle, "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness,

humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. . . . And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."—*Guthrie.*

[15162] This is the *completive* grace, which fills up what was wanting to perfect the Christian character—as the keystone closes in the arch, or the capital crowns the column. This is also the *most enduring* grace: for "charity never faileth;" when hope shall have become fruition, and faith shall have become sight, charity will still remain the brightest ornament of a redeemed soul. This is also the *most heavenly* grace: for not only is it to survive in heaven, when its sister graces shall have passed away, but it also came down from heaven. This is also the *divinest* grace: for while faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, are only human graces, charity is a Divine attribute—one of the effluent beams, or rather the concentrated radiance, of Godhead's own glory; for "God is love."—*Truill.*

[15163] Love alone brings our earthly life into a real relation to our eternal life, and assures us of it. "Charity never faileth," writes the apostle; "but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." Love alone remains in eternity; everything else, however noble it may be in itself, is only a gift—a means towards an end. If the building of the inner man, that is to say, the building of love, is finished, the scaffolding is demolished. If thou hast not this pure love for God in Christ, and this is not thy proper life, thou wilt certainly take nothing with thee into eternity, but guilt and the pain of death. If thy Christianity does not bear this for thee, then throw it away as dead and useless.—*Richard Rothe, D.D.*

**3 The equality of faith and hope with charity as regards permanence, though differentiated therefrom in comparative value.**

[15164] Of one class of things, gifts of prophecy, gifts of tongues, gifts of knowledge, St. Paul says that they shall perish. Of another class of things, faith, hope, charity, he says that they abide. He does not say of any one of them, for ever. But the "now," which he does say, is not the "now" of 1 Cor. xiii. 12—it is a different word in the Greek, and has no intimation, like that of its being limited to the present. Whereas the "abideth" is the very word used in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews in contrast with "things that can be shaken." It is the very word of the tenth chapter of that Epistle, "a better and an abiding substance." It is the very word of the thirteenth chapter of the same Epistle, "Here have we no abiding city, but we seek that (abiding city) which is to come." There is this

point, therefore, of deep interest in the concluding saying of St. Paul's great chapter on charity, that it seems to represent the three graces, of faith, hope, and love, as alike perpetual, alike perpetual, and leaves us to seek in some other consideration the superiority to its two companions of the grace of love. What is it which authorizes the assumption that faith and hope shall perish with the mortal? It is easy to say (as though it settled the question) that faith is the opposite of sight, and hope the opposite of fruition, and that therefore they can have no place in heaven, of which the very idea is sight, and of which the very idea is joy. But who told us that the invisible will become literally visible in "that world"? who told us that "seeing" is the right word for one no longer in the body? Or who told us that the very first entrance into the inheritance of the saints in light will give all that shall ever be given of satisfaction, of knowledge, of joy? If we know not for certain these two things, we have no plea for setting bounds, whether of time or place, to that grace of faith, which is the soul's sight, or to that grace of hope, which is the soul's prospect.—*Dean Vaughan.*

## VI. ITS RELATION TO OTHER PRINCIPLES, GIFTS, AND QUALITIES.

### 1 To truth.

[15165] What is love without truth, or truth without love? They purify and ennoble each other.—*G. W. Clinton.*

### 2 To knowledge.

[15166] The world is made poor whenever it loses pathos. Whenever the emotional goes down, man goes down. Logic is but intermediate help; it is but a poor ladder compared to heart, love, pathos, sensibility. Love must endure as God endureth. This is it which binds Christ and Christians—love. Love is knowledge. Love hath the key of interpretation. Love can explain what learning can never fathom. Love knoweth the Lord afar off—beyond the stormy deep, in the far-away desert, in the night-time dark and cold. Love can see the invisible and touch the distant. Do we love Christ, or are we still in the beggarly region of mere controversy and cold intellectual inquiry?—*Dr. Parker.*

[15167] We may die without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom. But, if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? Just as much as it avails the devil and his angels!—*Wesley.*

### 3 To mercy.

[15168] In some things they agree, in some things they differ, like waters that may have two different spring-heads, but meet in the stream. Love and mercy differ thus; Love is more extensive; the diocese that Love walks and visits in is larger. Mercy properly respects

them that are miserable. Love is of a larger consideration; Love is like a friend that visits them that are well; Mercy is like a physician that visits only them that are sick. Again, Love acts more out of affection; Mercy acts out of a principle of conscience; Mercy lends its help to another; Love gives its heart to another. Thus they differ; but Love and Mercy agree in this, they are both ready to do good offices; both of them have soundings of bowels, and healing under their wings.—*T. Watson.*

## VII. ITS BLESSEDNESS AND INFLUENCE.

[15169] When we love we live.—*W. Congreve.*

[15170] It is very hard for even a strong man to carry far a very large load of logs of wood, but if he burns them, it is very easy to carry the ashes of the logs; so it is with the burdens of sorrows and trials, if we consume them with the fire of charity, the load becomes at once easy and light.—*Anselm.*

[15171] Oh, divinest Christian charity, what tongue can worthily describe thy most heavenly beauty, thy incomparable sweetness, thy more than royal clemency and bounty! How nobly dost thou enlarge our minds beyond the narrow sphere of self and private regard, into an universal ease and complacency, making every man ourself, and all concerns to be ours! How dost thou entitle us unto, how dost thou invest us in all the goods imaginable; dost enrich us with the wealth, dost prefer us with the honour, dost adorn us with the wisdom and virtue, dost bless us with all the prosperity of the world; whilst all our neighbour's good by our rejoicing therein becometh our own! How dost thou raise a man above the reach of all mischiefs and disasters, of all troubles and griefs, since nothing can disturb or discompose that soul wherein thou dost constantly reside and absolutely reign! How easily dost thou, without pain or hazard, without drawing blood or striking stroke, render him that enjoyeth thee an absolute conqueror over all his foes, triumphant over all injuries without, and all passions within; for he can have no enemy who will be a friend to all, and nothing is able to cross him who is disposed to take everything well! How sociable, how secure, how pleasant a life might we lead under thy kindly governance! What numberless sorrows and troubles, fears and suspicions, cares and distractions of mind at home, what tumults and tragedies abroad might be prevented, if men would but hearken to thy mild suggestions! What a paradise would this world then become in comparison to what it now is, where, thy good precepts and advices being neglected, uncharitable passions and unjust desires are predominant! How excellent, then, is that doctrine which brought thee down from heaven! and would but man embrace thus the peace and joy of heaven with thee!—*Barrow.*



## VIII. ITS PRACTICAL SPHERE.

[15172] We may trace the practical working of this spirit—1. In charity for the opinions of others in matters of religion. 2. In covering the faults of others. 3. In actively helping the necessities of our fellow-men. 4. In devising wise and beneficent measures of philanthropy and reform.—*J. P. Thompson.*

## IX. ITS MORAL POWER.

## 1 It is an actively operative moral force.

[15173] A man may be a miser of his wealth ; he may tie up his talent in a napkin ; he may bury himself in his reputation ; but he is always generous in his love. Love cannot stay at home ; a man cannot keep it to himself ; like light, it is constantly travelling ; a man must spend it, must give it away.—*N. Macleod.*

[15174] Love is the great instrument of nature, the bond and cement of society, the spirit and spring of the universe. Love is such an affection as cannot properly be said to be in the soul, as the soul to be in that : it is the whole man wrapped up into one desire.—*R. South, D.D.*

[15175] True love is disinterested ; it rests on virtue, and looks to it ; it springs and fires what is good and noble within us, and is ever drawing us to its likeness ; it is no romance, and has no death in it as that has ; it is life—full, sweet life, ever holding on its upward way.—*Hooker.*

[15176] True love is never idle, but worketh to serve him whom he loveth.—*St. Augustine.*

## 2 It is the mightiest of moral forces.

[15177] "Love is strong as death," says an inspired writer ; "many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." And never is this master-principle more gloriously triumphant than when it is exerted to reclaim, restore, and purify the wandering spirit. For wherever there is a heart to be won, it will be won by kindness ; and wherever there is a spark of virtuous sensibility, it will be cherished and enkindled by the breath of mild consideration. Force, indeed, may outwardly constrain the sinner, and terror may suddenly arrest him. But it is not thus that the blessed work of moral renovation is completed. It is charity alone which can procure the permanent and voluntary devotedness of body, soul, and spirit. It is only by the cords of affection that men are so drawn to the service of their Maker as to find it perfect freedom. And perhaps it may not be too much to affirm, that the moral omnipotence of God Himself is resolvable into this one eternal principle, that God is love.—*Bp. Jebb.*

## 3 It is an indestructible moral force.

[15178] True love fears no winter. No, no ! its spring is, and ever remains.—*Ludwig Tieck.*

[15179] Charity is a kind of asbestos, which in a stove of fire, when once kindled, cannot be extinguished ; no wind can blow out its flame, no water can quench its heat, no storm can put out its fire.—*Isidore.*

## X. ITS MEASURE OR STANDARD.

## 1 "Love one another as I have loved you."

[15180] Let us not mistake this meaning. He asks not that our love should equal His, but *resemble* His ; not that it should be of the same strength, but of the same kind. A pearl of dew will not hold the sun, but it may hold a spark of its light. A child by the sea, trying to catch the waves as they dash in clouds of crystal spray upon the sand, cannot hold the ocean in a tiny shell, but he may hold a drop of the ocean water. "There is an ocean of love in My heart," says Christ ; "let a drop of that ocean be received into yours."—*C. Standford, D.D.*

## 2 "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

[15181] It is the loving another as myself, so as to desire his welfare and felicity as my own ; where we must note, that love to ourselves is the measure of the love we owe to others. But yet we are also to consider that this measure itself is to be measured ; for we are not to measure our love to others by the love we bear to ourselves otherwise than as that also agrees with our superior rule, which obliges us so to love ourselves as to design and seek our own true felicity and best good—to "lay hold on eternal life," to "work out our own salvation."—*J. Howe.*

[15182] When we are so devoted to works of charity and philanthropy as to think nothing of ourselves ; when we seek out the poor that we may comfort them ; when we go after the ignorant, carrying to them the lamp of knowledge ; when we speak to the hopeless the word of encouragement ; when we plan much and work heartily for the restoration of sinners, then shall men remember that it is written, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—*Dr. Parker.*

## XI. ITS REQUISITE CATHOLICITY.

[15183] It is an old saying that charity begins at home ; but this is no reason it should not go abroad ; a man should live with the world as a citizen of the world ; he may have a preference for the particular quarter, or square, or even alley in which he lives, but he should have a generous feeling for the welfare of the whole.—*Cumberland.*

## XII. EGYPTIAN EMBLEM OF LOVE.

[15184] Amongst other things in the learning of the Egyptians, there is to be seen the picture and figure of charity, hieroglyphically set out like a child that is naked, with a heart in his hand, giving honey to a bee that wanteth wings.

1. As a child humble and meek as Moses, not churlish and dogged like Nabal. 2. Naked, because the charitable man must not give his alms for ostentation to be seen of men. 3. With a heart in his hand, because the heart and hand of a charitable man must go together—he must be a cheerful giver. 4. Giving honey unto a bee, not to a drone—relieving poor men that will labour, not lazy beggars that will take no pains. And lastly, to a bee without wings—to such as would gather honey if they were able, would work if they could; but the want of wings shows lack of strength, health, and other the like abilities make them unable to help themselves; thus to do is not charity mistaken, misapplied, ill bestowed, but seasonable, suitable, and well regulated.—*Spencer*.

### XIII. METHODS OF ITS ATTAINMENT AND CULTURE.

- 1 By setting ever before us the perfect example of love which God has given us in His Son.

[15185] The fire of love can only be kindled from heaven. To God we must turn in order that we may learn what love is. Only in His light can we see light. Only because He first loved us can we learn to love Him, and our neighbours in Him. His love is written on everything around us and within us. It is spoken by His Incarnate Word in a language which all can hear and understand. It is in the life of Jesus that we see a picture of the perfect love of God. It was from this life that St. Paul penned his description of charity. He was the charity that suffereth long and is kind; He was the charity that is not puffed up and doth not behave itself unseemly; He was the charity that seeketh not her own, and is not easily provoked. This was the model from which St. Paul drew. This was the vision that presented itself to him. Had not his Lord to bear with men? Must not the disciple learn from Him to bear all things, to believe all things, to hope all things, to endure all things?—*Canon Vernon Hutton*.

[15186] It is from this model that we must learn what is this gift of charity which we are bidden to seek for. It would be an exercise useful both for the improvement of our knowledge of Him, and for the cultivation of this particular grace, if we could note down the different clauses of this definition of Divine charity, and find out incidents in the life of Jesus which show how He fulfilled it in each particular, and contrast our own conduct with His. It is by such close and intimate study of Him that we are enabled to imitate Him. If an artist desires to copy some great work of art, a picture or a statue, he would wish to have it constantly in his presence, so that he might become filled with its influence, even at such times when he was not consciously studying it. It is in such a manner that we should drink in the Spirit of Jesus. At stated times we set ourselves diligently to meditate upon Him, so that we may gain a clear

comprehension of the underlying principles which moulded His life. But at all times we may feel the sweet influence of His presence, and may learn ever to live as in His sight, and under His guidance.—*Ibid*.

- 2 By fulfilling all the requirements of love.

(1) *Contemplation of the perfect model of a life of love will not make us loving unless we seek to do the things which love demands.*

[15187] It is not difficult for any of us to love those towards whom we feel drawn. There is nothing of the Divine charity in this. The Divine charity bids us love those whom we find to be naturally unlovable. "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). Probably most people know some one whom they find it hard to love, some one who has injured them, who has made himself disagreeable, who is a successful rival, who has an unpleasant manner. Do you know any such? Have you an unkind feeling towards them? Should you be secretly pleased to hear that something ill has befallen them? If so, reflect that God has given them to you in order that you may have an opportunity of cultivating this Divine gift of charity. Seek opportunities of doing acts of kindness to such persons. Speak kindly about them when their acts or characters are discussed. If it is in your power to promote their interests, do so. If no such opportunities are afforded you, learn to pray for them. You cannot long dislike a person whose name is daily in your prayers. If you persevere in such a course, you will find that your mind is undergoing a change, even a renewal. Nothing is so likely to make us love others as the endeavour to do them a kindness. Think, when you are tempted to be uncharitable, how the Master would have acted if He were in your place. If you learn no more, you will learn at least this one thing—charity never faileth.—*Ibid*.

- 3 By rightly estimating the power of love.

[15188] Power does not lie in noisy demonstration or in visible force. The puffing of the steam-engine, the screech of the locomotive, are not the motive power; the steam that moves the engine steals quietly into the cylinder through a yielding valve, and works by pressure, not by noise. The power that locks up the streams and converts the river into a pavement of solid crystal—you cannot hear it any more than you can hear the motion of the planets. The power that again melts down these barriers and unlocks the frozen earth, can you hear that, though it makes the trees clap their hands and wakes all the birds to song? And can you hear love, or weigh it, or measure it? But in that little word lies a power greater than philosophy, diplomacy, or arms, to rule and mould the world.—*J. P. Thompson*.

- 4 By constantly practising and studying love.

[15189] It is not in everybody's power, be-

cause he has not a fortune answerable to it, to form a standing habit of charity, by redressing the injured, relieving the distressed, and cherishing men of merit; but it is in everybody's power to beget in himself this lovely disposition of mind, by studying to adjust his temper to theirs with whom he lives, by complying with their humours as far as he innocently can, by soothing their distresses, bearing with their infirmities, and by incommoding himself in some points to gratify others. On the contrary, the indulgence of an occasional fit of ill-humour paves the way to an habitually bad temper. And to those who think it a small matter, Solon's answer is a very just one: "Yes, but custom is a great one." Did we consider seriously that as often as we are exerting a spirit of needless contradiction, or venting an ill-natured wit to mortify those about us, we are cherishing a principle of ill-will, the very temper of the damned, it would, it is to be hoped, put some stop to this practice. But here the misfortune lies: men are more ambitious to display the abilities of the head than to cultivate the good qualities of the heart. Though the latter are in everybody's power, the former few have any title to.—*Seed.*

[15190] We must give diligence to cultivate this grace by improving every opportunity for the expression of it. If this does no good to others, it will bless our own heads. This applies especially to giving of our substance. The giving of many men as compared with their means is "but *shelling off some of the loose outer scales of a Leviathan of wealth.*"—*J. P. Thompson.*

5 By diligently striving not to add to the sin and sorrow around us, but, on the other hand, to relieve it when we may.

[15191] One thing at least we each can do. We can *try* not to add to the evil, but to make a life so dark as this, by one streak brighter, a world so sorrowful, in some slight measure less joyless by our presence in the gloom. It is possible to be sincere yet kind; possible to see the best rather than the worst in human character; possible to make the most of what is good. Some truer recollection of our own grave and depressing faults, amidst, all the time, our conscious sincerity, will often teach a lesson of long-suffering and charity towards our fellow-men. In fact we can be *kind*. The age we live in is one of social perplexity. As years go on that perplexity seems to increase. Our great cities are sinks of iniquity; the relation of master and servant, workman and employé, is out of joint. Waifs and strays, little ragged homeless urchins, with bright faces and merry voices,—for they are still too young to be subdued by sorrow,—are tossed about our city. Beneath the gas-lamps the giant selfishness is playing its devilish trade in "the great sin of great cities." What can we do? Reverse the question and you have the answer, let us do what we can. Each soul helped is a great work done.—*Canon W. J. Knox Little.*

6 By thankfully participating in love's special sacrament.

[15192] Remember, the Lord has left one sacrament especially, not only for the remembrance of His own love, but for the manifestation and strengthening of His people's love among themselves.—*Anon.*

#### XIV. HINDRANCES TO ITS EXPRESSION.

1 The want of consideration for others.

[15193] We judge harshly of the motives of others because we do not well consider all the reasons of their actions; we speak untruths, because we do not consider what is due to the sensibilities of others; we are censorious in our judgment of faults, because we do not consider well the circumstances of our neighbours; we are severe upon opinions, because we do not inquire into their origin and grounds. A candid allowance for the circumstances of others would almost always mitigate that severity of judgment which fastens upon no outward act, or makes a man an offender for a word.—*J. P. Thompson.*

2 The want of intercourse with others.

[15194] If travel enlarges the mind, it expands the heart also to a kindlier judgment of men, and sympathy toward them. The monk in his convent seems to you but a lazy hireling of the Church; the Arab in his tent seems but a roving plunderer, an Ishmaelite with his hand against every man; but when you partake of their humble lot, you find them men of a common nature.—*Ibid.*

[15195] There is a key to every man's heart—though some have intricate and difficult locks, which require both skill and patience to open them. Yet in every man's heart—as in that tiny mechanism of Swiss invention—there sleeps a little bird of song, which, can you but learn how to wind it aright, will start up at your call and imitate the notes of love that you have been taught of God. It is worth years of toil to teach that bird the song of heavenly love.—*Ibid.*

3 Lurking selfishness.

[15196] "All the little mean work of our nature," says Mrs. Stowe, applying to the heart a figure from housekeeping, "all the little mean work of our nature is generally done in a small dark closet just a little back" of the subject in which we profess to be interested. We do not suffer our meanness to come to the light even of our own consciousness—if we can help it. But when we find ourselves parrying off some appeal for kindness, giving way to some prejudice against others, inventing excuses for disregarding them—however plausible all this may seem to us—it is a most unhappy frame of mind: this is not love at work,—but some lurking selfishness, in the dark closet, is pulling the wires, confounding moral distinctions and perverting all good and generous affections.—*Anon.*



## CONFESSION OF CHRIST.

### I. ITS NATURE.

[15197] A confession of Christ means a recognition of Him as "the author and finisher of our faith," and of His religion as the only moral means to sanctify our nature, and lead us to happiness in the future world. It means to declare Him in His true character, in the mystery and glory of His person, and in the functions He fulfils for us—as our Prophet, Priest, and King.—*J. Owen Griffiths.*

### II. ITS REASONABLENESS AND NECESSITY.

[15198] If people are loud in the praise of the physician who has cured them of some deadly malady, recommending others to trust and seek his skill, why should not Christ's people crown Him with equal honours, commend Him to a dying world: "declare what He hath done for their soul," like David; and like the Samaritan who threw away her pitcher, and, running to the city, brought them all out, crying, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"—*T. Guthrie, D.D.*

[15199] It is not sufficient to carry religion in our hearts as fire is carried in flint stones, but we are outwardly, visibly, apparently, to serve and honour the living God.—*Hooker.*

[15200] It is a bad thing ostentatiously to parade religion, but it is a base thing for a Christian man to be ashamed of it; not to stand by his colours, by his silence, if not by his speech, to deny his Master; to sneak away, like a coward, out of the fight.—*T. Guthrie, D.D.*

[15201] It is impossible to believe with the heart and not confess with the mouth—this were to have a fire that did not burn, a light which did not illuminate, a principle which did not actuate, a hope which did not stimulate. Confession is but the necessary result of belief—the demonstration and exhibition. It is but faith showing itself in speech, even as works are but belief showing itself in action.—*Rev. H. Melvill, B.D.*

[15202] The man who is ashamed of Christ before man, can he be secretly the friend of Christ? Impossible. The sentiment *must* break forth and show itself. Moreover, God requires confession; it is one of those fruits of faith that cannot be dispensed with. It is not optional whether we will confess what we feel. We do not really feel what we do not confess. If we would refrain in this great matter of confessing Christ, it will happen to us as it did to Jeremiah, "His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."—*Ibid.*

[15203] There may be an occasional cowardice

or some prudential motive, perhaps, which prevents the frank avowal of the Saviour, but the life habit of the true Christian will be by life and conduct to bear witness to his Redeemer's name.—*Ibid.*

[15204] Speech is one of the most distinguishing properties of man. Language is no human function. God made the vehicle in which thought may be embodied as well as the power by which thought may be excogitated. Ought, then, the hand, the ear, the eye, to be pressed into the service of religion, and is the tongue to be exempt? Nay, this best member must do its part, otherwise the whole man is not enlisted in that service of its Master which requires an entire consecration.—*Ibid.*

### III. ITS EXEMPLIFICATION INSTANCED.

[15205] One Victorinus, a great man at Rome, who had many rich heathen friends and relations, was converted to the Christian religion. He repaired to a friend of his, also a convert, and told him secretly that he, too, was a Christian. "I will not believe thee to be a Christian," said the other, "until I see thee openly profess it in the church." "What!" said Victorinus, "do the church walls make a Christian?" But directly the answer came to his own heart, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels." He was ready to bear the scorn and persecution of his heathen friends that he might honour his Master in a public confession of His name.—*Augustine.*

### IV. WAYS IN WHICH CHRIST MAY BE CONFESSED.

#### 1 By open profession of faith.

(1) *Characteristics which should mark genuine profession.*

##### a. Sincerity.

[15206] It is surely most necessary to beware, as our Lord solemnly bids us, of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. We may be infected with it, even though we are not conscious of our insincerity; for they did not *know* they were hypocrites. Nor need we have any definite bad object plainly before us, for they had none—only the vague desire to be seen and honoured by the world, such as may influence us. So it would seem that there are vast multitudes of Pharisaical hypocrites among baptized Christians; *i.e.*, men professing without practising. Nay, so far we may be called hypocritical, one and all; for no Christian on earth altogether lives up to his profession.—*Cardinal Newman.*

[15207] A plausible profession may wear the look of innocence, and conceal from human eyes the foulest heart's corruption.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[15208] Religious profession was at first a conflict—a sacrifice; now it is become a trade.—*R. Cecil.*

*b. Consistency.*

[15209] A Christian, when he makes a good profession, should be sure to make his profession good. It is sad to see many walk in the dark themselves, who carry a lantern for others.—*Pecker.*

[15210] Let us remark that not only is "fruit which remains"—that is, a Christian profession which lasts on through life—the only thing which can afford a man himself any well-grounded hope or assurance that he is indeed numbered among the saved and redeemed; it is also the only kind of Christian profession which will recommend religion to those who are not Christians. We all know quite well that, although it ought not to be so, men in general are very ready to judge of religion by the conduct and character of those who make a profession of religion. And just as a humble, consistent believer is a letter of recommendation of Christianity to all who know him—letting his light shine before others in such fashion as leads them to glorify his Father in heaven—just so is the inconsistent believer's life a stumbling-block in the path of his fellow-men—a something to make them doubt whether religion be a real thing, and not a mere matter of profession and pretence. Every one whose duty has led him into such work could tell you, that in practice and in fact, the inconsistent and unworthy conduct of professed members of the Christian Church, is what does more than anything else to encourage those who are regardless about religion to go on in their regardless way.—*T. Guthrie, D.D.*

[15211] Awful indeed are the responsibilities of making a high religious profession; and he who by such a profession lifts himself above the crowd resembles Nelson when appearing with all his orders at Trafalgar; he is only too likely to make himself a mark for the fiery darts of the great enemy.—*Dean Goulburn.*

(2) *Nature of the religious profession of backsliders.*

[15212] The religious profession of some people is like the ashes on a rusty altar, which show that there once were warmth and light and flame, but which also show that it is long since they worshipped here.—*J. Hamilton.*

(3) *The easiness with which a false profession may be sustained.*

[15213] Painted fire needs no fuel; a dead and formal profession is easily kept up.—*T. Manton.*

2 By bearing witness to the truth.

(1) *The difficulty, danger, and glory of this witness.*

[15214] *To bear witness!* what a world of meaning is hidden in these few words: how many of the grandest elements of human nature

it requires to mould a character like this! Every man values the honest hearty good word of his neighbours; and there are associations gathered round the heart of each of us which it is impossible to efface. To be estranged from those we have lived with and loved from infancy—to pass from under the shadow of the faith that has fostered us—to look upon old sights, old haunts, familiar scenes, and find they are but fiends to mock us with a memory of what once was—to see contempt and scorn assume the place where love was wont to reign—to know that the affections we prized more than life are changed to wormwood—to watch our tried and trusted friends deliberately range themselves in the foemen's ranks—to have the harrowing conviction burned in upon the soul that we must go on now alone—go along the path we have chosen, and forego all the pleasures on which we counted to render existence endurable—these, *these* things try the temper and the tone of spirit—these constitute a frightful and a fiery ordeal at which human nature shudders. And yet all this must frequently be undergone for the cause of truth. The alternative is a terrible one, and many waver; but such have not the elements of real greatness in them, the qualities which constitute one who must bear witness. The world has its laws and customs, its usages and ordinances, and woe to the man who sets himself in opposition to these. The world has its idols, its creed, its rule of faith—woe to the man who rises and declares its worship blasphemy—its creed a falsehood—its rule of faith a damnable delusion. Woe! truly; but unutterable woe would it be if these men did not rise up ever and anon, to smite the lazy blood into the cheeks of humanity; to exorcise the demon that directs the rabid multitude; to breathe a holier feeling through a land defaced by blood and crime. They are the pioneers of freedom, the vanguard of the hosts of truth. And their fate is to be reviled and ridiculed—blasphemed and buffeted—tortured body and soul with all the ingenuity of cruelty. Well, so it is, and so it will be; they have counted the cost; their death-smile is the calm of conquest; and—

"They flee far

To a sunnier strand;  
And follow Love's folding star  
To the evening land."

—*J. W. Lester, D.D.*

(2) *Its exemplification by Christ Himself.*

[15215] Jesus spoke and was not silent when the cause at stake did not concern His own private interest, but that of universal truth. He was not silent when the high priest asked Him "I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God?"—neither was He silent when Pilate asked Him: "Art Thou a King, then?" And the reason why He was not silent on these occasions was, that we might know what to answer to questions of similar import. . . . He was not silent because He could then witness a confes-

sion which would be echoed back from a million of hearts, which thousands were to seal with their blood. . . . By that confession, with which Christ signed His own sentence of death, He has taught us that we too must confess, and that we must confess the truth, even if such confession is the sealing of our own death-warrant. Jesus spoke because it was not His own interest, but the interest of the whole human race that was involved.—*Prof. A. Tholuck, D.D.*

### 3 By bearing the marks of the Saviour.

#### (1) *St. Paul's glory in bearing the marks of Christ.*

[15216] Paul says not, "I have," but "I bear," like a man priding himself on a trophy and royal ensigns. Although it seems a disgrace, yet does this man vaunt of his wounds; and, like military standard-bearers, so does he exult in bearing about these wounds. And why does he say this? More clearly than by any argument, than by any language, do I hereby, says he, vindicate myself. For these wounds utter a voice louder than a trumpet against my opponents, and against those who say I play the hypocrite in my teaching, and speak what may please men. For no one who saw a soldier retiring bloody from the battle, and with a thousand wounds, would dare to condemn him, who bore on his body the proofs of his valour, of cowardice and treachery; and so ought ye, says he, to judge of me. And if any one desire to hear my defence, and to learn my sentiments, let him consider my wounds, which afford a stronger proof than words spoken or written.—*St. Chrysostom.*

#### (2) *The necessity for our bearing the marks of Christ.*

[15217] If we have, like our Redeemer, the sin and sorrow of the world upon our hearts, we shall bear marks, not necessarily like St. Paul, inflicted by others, but by ourselves. While healthy Christianity does not develop into unnecessary and monkish austerities, yet the choicest and noblest of Christ's followers know what it is to be weary, not of their work, but in it, and engage in religious exercises or works of mercy in times and on occasions when repose or recreation might have been grateful to the physical frame. A Christian without some such marks has failed to enter into the spirit of self-abnegation and self-sacrifice inspired by the gospel. These honoured "marks of Christ," however, are too rare in this luxurious age.—*C. N.*

[15218] You have noticed that different flocks of sheep have different marks upon them; sometimes a red mark, sometimes a blue mark, sometimes a straight mark, and sometimes a crooked mark. The Lord, our Shepherd, has a mark for His sheep. It is a red mark—the mark of the cross. "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—*Talmage.*

### V. RULES WHICH SHOULD REGULATE THE CHRISTIAN'S CONFESSION OF HIS MASTER.

#### 1 It must be intelligently manifest and practically evident.

[15219] When we urge one whom we have been persuading to go to the physician who has benefited us, he must see for himself that we have been benefitted. Though he may not have known what we were, he must see what we are. It will be vain for us to tell him of a cure and of returning health if the wasted form, and the pale cheek, and the hollow eye, and the bloodless lip, tell a different and a contradictory story. Our feelings will not weigh against the evidence of his senses and our own truth-telling looks. He must see for himself the proofs at least of returning health—the evidences of recruited strength—the witness of repaired energy. If he sees all this to confirm the witness of our lips, it gives a weight to our words, and a power to our persuasions, which nothing else can give, and which, while it makes our recommendation of the physician of double weight, makes his fault also double, and doubles his responsibility if he refuses to accept it and believe our word. So must the Christian's character support his confession of his master if he would have his testimony to the power of Christ weighty and influential.—*W. W. Champneys.*

#### 2 It must be determinately resolute and nobly zealous.

[15220] Since thou art now upon terms of turning unto God, taking possession upon thee, and giving up thy name unto Christ, the blessedest business that ever thou wentest about, be well advised, consider seriously what thou undertakest, and cast deliberately beforehand what it is like to cost thee. Thou must make an account to become the drunkard's song, and to have those sit in the gate to speak against thee; the vilest of men to rail upon thee, and the wisest of the world to laugh at thee. Thou must be content to live a despised man, to be scoffed at, to be hated of all men; to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts; for keeping a good conscience, standing on God's side, and Christ's sake, thou must deny thyself, thy worldly wisdom, carnal reason, corrupt affections; thy acceptance with the world, favour of great ones, credit and applause with the most; thy passions, profit, pleasures, possibility of rising, and growing great; thy nearest friends, dearest companions, ease, liberty, life, and grow by little and little into Esther's most noble and invincible resolution, ever when doing God's will, threateneth any earthly danger: "And if I perish, I perish."—*R. Bolton.*

[15221] This is very pleasing to a gracious soul, so far as faith is in exercise. Far from being ashamed of the gospel of Christ, he is ready and willing to tell all who will hear what God has done for his soul. Many young converts, in the first warmth of the affection, have



more need of a bridle than of a spur in this concern. For want of prudence to time things rightly, and perhaps for want of more tenderness mixed with their zeal, they are apt to increase their own troubles, and sometimes, by pushing things too far, to obstruct the success of their well-meant endeavours to convince others. But though this is a fault, it is a fault on the right side, which time, experience, and observation, will correct. And though we are hasty enough to condemn the irregular overflows of a heart deeply impressed with a sense of eternal things, I doubt not but the Lord, who owns and approves the main principle from whence they spring, beholds them with a far more favourable eye than he does the cold, cautious, temporizing conduct of some others, who value themselves upon their prudence. We should judge thus, if we had servants of our own. If we had one who was heartily and affectionately devoted to our interests, always ready to run by night or by day, refusing no danger or difficulty, from a desire to please us, though sometimes, through ignorance or inattention, he should make a mistake, we should prefer him to another of greater knowledge and abilities, who was always slow and backward, and discovered at least as much care to save himself from inconveniences as to promote our service. However, this warm zeal usually suffers abatement; we are flesh as well as spirit; and there are some circumstances attending a profession of the gospel, on the account of which it may be with propriety termed a yoke to us, who have so many remaining evils within us, and so many outward temptations to call them forth. It will certainly stir up opposition from the world, and may probably break in upon our dearest connections, and threaten our most necessary temporal interests (2 Tim. iii. 12; Matt. x. 36).—*J. Newton.*

### 3 It must be real, sincere, and unostentatious.

[15222] It is no good sign in a tree, when all the sap goes up into the leaves, and is spent that way; nor in a Christian when all his grace shoots up into words, a verbal goodness; no reality at all.—*T. Adams.*

[15223] Many there are that have nothing to prove themselves Christians, but a naked profession, of whom we may say as they do of the cinnamon tree, that the bark is more worth than all they have besides.—*Gurnall.*

[15224] A forward young enthusiast said to an aged saint, "Do you suppose you have any religion?" "None to speak of," was the replying answer. While, as in duty bound, avowing our attachment to Christ, if we are His disciples, and declaring the joys of His service, let us remember that the religion is not of much value which cannot speak for itself.—*Anon.*

[15225] Let us never pretend to more piety than we possess, never impose upon the unthinking world, never deceive the charitable

church, never mock the irresistible heart-searcher.—*Ibid.*

## VI. ASPECTS OF A FALSE AND GENUINE PROFESSION OF CHRIST, WITH THE SPECIAL PROMISE HELD OUT TO THE TRUE CONFESSOR.

[15226] There is a spurious aspect of this duty which consists in a great deal of lofty precept and no perceptible practice. The man who *thus* professes, generally parades the world in an ostentatiously joyful frame of mind, assuring every one he meets of his belief "in the Lord Jesus Christ," together with his full assurance of the future reward as a Divine recognition of dead faith! He practically accounts the apostle's admonition as to the *running* for the prize, to be really unnecessary, and though fully admitting the precept, "Be ye followers of God," sees no impracticability in the way of its fulfilment, notwithstanding the fact that he remains comfortably *sitting down* in some easy posture of lounging security. The fruits of the Spirit are of course all very excellent, but (the glory of God being left out of account altogether), considering that he is already justified without them, *cui bono?* In striking contrast stands the true confessor of Christ, who believes that he can best bear witness to his Lord by showing that a holy life is the only real way of manifesting to the world the genuine and vital faith which he professes with his lips—by showing that the mighty influence of the God of love *is* working in him, not only to will but to *do*, of His good pleasure—by showing that the chief object of his existence here, and inspiring motive of every action is not merely the selfish hope of somehow "getting at last to heaven," but to display in each thought, word, and deed, the honour and glory of heaven's King—to cheerfully suffer in His just cause—to willingly deny himself for His dear sake—to cultivate every noble impulse of the soul—to crucify, in daily death, the body of sin. This is the true confession of Christ, to which that sublime promise is held out (and which *only* such true confession may appropriate), "Who-soever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32).—*A. M. A. W.*

## VII. REFLECTIONS ON THE CONFESSION OF ST. PETER.

### 1 Substance of the confession.

"Whom say ye that I am? Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi. 15, 16).

[15227] The laudations which Christ has received from unbelievers are somewhat remarkable. Seldom has Christ's personal worthiness been disputed. Men are compelled, as were the Roman officers, to fall back before His majesty. And yet to acknowledge Him to be great and good is not enough. We must confess Him to be the Divine Saviour of men. This

comprises right ideas as to His office and His person. He is "the Christ," the Messiah, the Anointed. This title means that He was solemnly consecrated to a definite work. What was that work? In the old dispensation three classes of God's officers were anointed—prophets, priests, and kings. Christ combined all these offices; as *the* Christ He fulfilled the work which the others did but typify or begin. As the Christ He is the one authoritative teacher, the only Saviour to mediate between God and man, and the sole King who has control of human hearts. These offices lie at the foundation of our three great duties—repentance, faith, and obedience; the Christ instructs us to turn from sin, offers a specific which is the basis of our trust, exercises authority before which we must bow.—*Rev. P. Foster.*

[15228] He is "the Son of the living God;" not a son of God, as an angel or a good man might be called, but "*the Son of the living God.*" The language refers to His sharing the Divine essence. The life peculiar to God was possessed by the Son. The Jews understood the phrase to imply Christ's divinity, and their understanding was not contradicted by Christ; He even allowed them to put Him to death on that understanding (Mark xiv. 62-64). Right views as to Christ's person are evidently essential. His power to make an atonement depends on His divinity. Our attitude toward Him is largely influenced by our recognition of that divinity. Christ must be the centre of our confession. Whatever else is believed by the Church, this must be the paramount and controlling truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. This is the source of all evangelical belief. From this limpid mountain lake of Peter's confession has sprung the broad and deep stream of belief from which the Church derives its life.—*Ibid.*

## 2 Source of the confession.

"*Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven*" (Matt. xvi. 17).

[15229] Christ can be acknowledged as our Divine Saviour, only as God, through the influence of the Spirit, converts the soul and gives it an inward witness to the sublime truth. We know Christ not merely by the intellect; it must be a spiritual perception. You may have the fullest descriptions of the planet Saturn, but when once the telescope reveals him to your delighted sight, swimming in golden beauty, thrice belted by his mysterious rings, through the sea of night, you feel that you knew nothing of him before. So, when one can speak with enthusiasm and tenderness of Christ, it is certain that his vision has received miraculous aid, and that the Father has revealed Him.—*Ibid.*

## 3 Power of the confession.

"*Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build My church,*" &c. (Matt. xvi. 18, 19).

[15230] It is through Christians, who are

made what they are by this confession, that the Church is built up, and rendered victorious. The words, "Thou art Peter," &c., have excited as great a storm of contention as if the rock stood in mid ocean and received the shock of opposing waves. Scholars are now, however, generally agreed that the rock referred to is Peter, but only as Peter by his confession became a rock. In these days of inventions, sand being permeated by cement, becomes an imperishable stone. Peter of himself was but sand; permeated by his convictions with regard to Christ, he became a rock.—*Ibid.*

[15231] The statement, "Thou art Peter," &c., does not refer to Peter alone, but only primarily. Peter's confession was shared by the other disciples. Christ asked, "Whom say ye that I am?" and Peter, as was his wont, answered for them. So not Peter alone, but the other apostles also, became the rock-foundations of the Christian Church (Rev. xxi. 14). On Christian men, then, infused with the grand convictions of this confession, rests the responsibility of Church growth.—*Ibid.*

[15232] The Church through its confession of Christ becomes a silent but mighty power. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The armies of the underworld, led by our great adversary, go out to attack the Church. Now there are temptations to sin, now to insidious forms of unbelief. They shall not prevail. The liveliest thing in the world is the Church of God. Even a local organization, however feeble, is hard to kill.—*Ibid.*

[15233] The Church through its confession gains authority over men. It has the keys of the kingdom of heaven. When Christ promised Peter that what he bound or loosed on earth should be bound or loosed in heaven, it was said not simply of Peter, nor yet of the apostles, but of the Church (Matt. xviii. 18). Nor was any mere ecclesiastical or hierarchical authority committed to the Church. There was no mysterious power of eternal damnation or of unlocking heaven, as claimed by some. Had not people once so believed, Henry IV. of Germany would never have stood three days and nights, barefooted, in the snow of mid-winter, before the castle of Canossa, pleading that the Pope's sentence of excommunication be removed. For the Church's authority is simply in the fact that it is the herald of God's will. It is to announce and explain the will of God. It bears the offer of pardon to those who will accept Christ, and of condemnation to those who will not.—*Ibid.*

## 4 Limitations of the confession.

"*Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ*" (Matt. xvi. 20).

[15234] This confession of Christ must be timely, and be wisely made. It was not to be proclaimed publicly then, because it was not

expedient to declare a truth till it could be proved, and it must be proved by Christ's life. That life was not finished, and the work of gathering conclusive evidence was not then complete. And further, as Christ conformed Himself to the ordinary principles of wisdom, and to the common laws of life, it would have been most injudicious at that point in His life to have declared Himself. A proclamation of His Messiahship would have caused Him to be apprehended prematurely, and His work to be ended before its completion. These reasons were long since removed, and therefore the prohibition is no longer in force. On the other hand, Christ now commands His people to bear witness of Him to the uttermost parts of the earth. The great lesson we are to learn from the charge Christ gave His disciples not to tell of his Messiahship, is one of wisdom in our choice of times and methods of proclaiming Him. We are to confess Him, but not to be unseasonable or injudicious in that confession.—*Ibid.*

## DEVOTION TO CHRIST.

### I. THE VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH DEVOTION TO CHRIST MAY BE MANIFESTED.

#### x By supremely loving Christ.

##### (1) *Necessity of love to Christ.*

[15235] Love enlarges the heart to Christ, and everything of Christ; valuation, delight, satisfaction, accompany it; it makes the heart free, noble, ready for service, compassionate, zealous. To think of glorifying God without hearts warmed, enlarged, made tender, compassionate by gospel love, is to think to fly without wings, or to walk without feet. What day, almost what business, wherein our love is not put to the trial in all the properties of it; whether it can bear and forbear, whether it can pity and relieve, whether it can hope all things, believe all things; whether it can exercise itself towards friends and towards enemies, whether it can give allowance for men's weakness and temptations; whether it can value Christ above all, and rejoice in Him in the loss of all; and many the like things it is continually tried withal (Hab. iiii. 17, 18).—*Anon.*

##### (2) *Its thoroughness.*

[15236] In these last days love has the calm of thought, the sobriety of conviction, the breadth that springs from a realization of Christ's work. The semi-erotic aspect it has sometimes been made to wear and that is still weakly cherished in some quarters has largely passed. The love we now render is the fidelity of our whole nature, the verdict of our intelligence, the assent of our conscience, the allegiance of our will, the loyalty of sympathetic conviction, all permeated with tender gratitude: but it is still personal, loving Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us.—*T. T. Munger.*

##### (3) *Its effects.*

a. It influences the whole character for good. [15237] It is no novelty even in the thought of the world. "George Eliot" says: "It is one of the secrets in that change of mental poise which has been fitly named conversion, that to many among us neither heaven nor earth has any revelation till some personality touches theirs with a peculiar influence, subduing them into receptiveness." It only needs to make this assertion universal to have in it a definition of the process of Christian faith, and almost a vindication of it by its superb insight. How otherwise shall we begin to secure this process of conversion; how uproot the selfishness that makes it necessary? Authority fails; the commandments are in the Old Testament, also in other sacred books it is claimed, but they had not much honour in their fruits. But when they issued from the lips of the living Christ, they fell into men's hearts like fire, and wrought in them as a passion. Will not thought open a path between evil and good? Thought may resolve conduct and character into their elements, but it cannot separate them. Philosophy makes slow progress in saving men; it has eyes to see man's misery, but no hands to lift him out of it. If, upon such a basis, one begins to struggle towards the good, the result is a hard, painful life, sustained by mere will, without warmth or glow or freedom, often overshadowed by doubts and mazed by sophistries, for there are philosophies and philosophies, a life more deficient and less exalted than it seems to itself, because it is not constantly matching itself with a personal standard. The measure of rules and bare ideals has little working efficacy, it is unsubstantial, it does not reorganize the complexity of life, for only life can measure life, it guides but imperfectly and lacks the strongest of motive powers—inspiration. There is light enough, but no warmth, matter enough, but no attraction. Goodness that is enforced or devised has no propagating power. You cannot think, or plan, or legislate it into existence; it is not a product or syllogism, nor a deduction of knowledge, nor a fruit of experience, but is akin to life and must be begotten. And so character is placed under the lead of personal love.—*Ibid.*

[15238] The great problem set before the Faith—nay, let us not generalize—the imperative need of every man is to get over from the natural and evil side of life to the Christ side, to give up worldly ways of feeling and acting, and pass in the Christly way; to die unto self and let Christ be formed in him, the true Son of God and of man taking the place of the Adamic self,—a very definite and imperative work lying before every human soul. It is the secret of life, it is the key of destiny. How to bring it about is the question. It is an achievement, for it is nothing less, wrought, so far as we are concerned, by love to Christ, and by the service of love. For the whole nature follows love. Whithersoever it goes all the faculties troop after it. It is the magnet of human nature;



where the heart is there are all the treasures of mind and will and moral nature. Let this love be planted in Christ,—won and fixed by our ever deepening sense of truth and goodness and all moral beauty,—and we begin to go over to Him upon it as upon a bridge. Character itself cannot be imparted or exchanged, but everything that goes to make character may be imparted, or quickened into action. Using this love as if it were some broad stream, the truth, the strength, the humility, the sympathy, the spiritual insight, the obedience, the very righteousness of Christ float down into us and become our own, and so at last we are one with Him and one with God, for He and God are one.—*Ibid.*

[15239] My heart I, Lord, devote to Thee entire;

The victim light with Thine own heavenly fire;  
Preserve, employ, and form it as Thine own:  
Oh, change my frozen to a torrid zone!  
Knowledge Divine into my mind instil;  
Be Thou the constant magnet of my will;  
Do Thou my senses guide, control, restrain;  
Oh may Thy love o'er all my passions reign!  
All I design, endeavour, hope, desire—  
All that I am, or have, or shall acquire,  
Without reserve I to Thy will resign—  
Jesus! I am no more mine own, but Thine.

—*Bp. Ken.*

δ. It impels the love of man as man.

[15240] At the threshold of life we are met by affections that check and call us off from inborn selfishness, the love of parents and of brother and sister, and then that fiery passion that ushers in a love that makes of twain one, and then the diviner, downward-flowing love upon children; it is in such ways as these, all personal, that evil is kept or crowded out, and we become tender and generous and pure. But beyond lies the broader sphere of humanity, for which there is but small native passion, and hence but little inspiring force impelling us to its duties. Yet this is the field of our highest duties, for here are our widest relations. And it is here chiefly that Christ becomes an inspiration through the loyalty of love. Christ is humanity to us, He has hardly any other relation; He was not a father or husband, as son and brother His relation is obscured, His citizenship is not emphasized. In a certain sense, it is hardly necessary to have an inspiring and saving Christ in these relations, they enforce themselves, they are still full of their original, Divine power. Not so, however, when we get outside of these domestic and neighbourly instincts. Our relation to humanity at large is so blurred that it fails to enforce its duties. Hence Christ put Himself solely and entirely into this relation, the Son of man, the Brother of all men, the Head of humanity, and there sets in play the Divine forces of universal love and pity and sympathy. When our love meets His in the loyalty of faith, we find ourselves rightly related to humanity and to God. Faith in Christ has for one of its main ends the proper adjustment

of the individual to society. The secret, essential relation of the Christ to humanity, and of humanity to God, flows to us along this channel of obedient, inspiring love, and so we come to love our neighbour as ourselves, and God supremely.—*T. T. Munger.*

c. It raises man to God.

[15241] The love of Christ triumphs gradually but surely over all sin, transforms character, turning even its weakness into strength, and so, from the depths of transgression and the very gates of hell, raises men to God.—*Alex. MacLaren, D.D.*

[15242] Earthly joy can take but a bat-like flight, always checked, always limited, in dusk and darkness. But the love of Christ breaks through the vaulting, and leads us up into the free sky above, expanding to the very throne of Jehovah, and drawing us still upward to the infinite heights of glory.—*F. R. Havergal.*

[15243] The man who has given himself to his country loves it better; the man who has fought for his friend honours him more; the man who has laboured for his community values more highly the interests he has sought to conserve; the man who has wrought and planned and endured for the accomplishment of God's plan in the world sees the greatness of it, the divinity and glory of it, and is himself more perfectly assimilated to it.—*R. S. Storrs.*

(4) *Its measure and test.*

[15244] Christ is not valued at all unless He be valued above all.—*Augustine.*

(5) *Reasons why Christ founded His system upon personal love and devotion to Himself.*

[15245] Why does this faith, that claims to be the world's salvation, wear this guise of personal relations? Simply because in no other way can man be delivered from his evil. There may be exceptions here and there in whom natural dispositions are so happily blended that they have attained to a stainless if cold virtue. But take men as they are, the bulk and mass of humanity, they are too blind to find their way by the light of precepts, too firmly wedded to evil to be moved by theories of virtue, too solidly imbedded in the custom of an "evil world" to be extricated by any play of reason. And as to experience, the fancied teacher of wisdom, with its "hoard of maxims," it is the weakest of all. Polonius is but "a tedious old fool" to the Hamlets who are struggling with their own weakness in the hard play of human life. It is the subtlest thought in the profoundest drama, that Hamlet is searching for a human love to upstay and inspire him; it is the key to all his wild testing talk with Ophelia; the love he found, but there was no strength in it; it could not draw together its scattered and faltering energies and set them to some definite end, and so his life sweeps on to its tragic close. There is in all these simply lack of motive-power. Men need instead something of the nature of a

passion to dislodge them, some deep-swelling current of feeling to sweep them away from evil towards goodness, from self towards God. Suppose Christ had simply depicted the miseries of sin and the inherent fitness and excellence of the virtues, what would He have done? What become? Simply another Rabbi with a few followers for a generation. He began instead by forming personal relations with a few men, captivating them by His Divine charms, making them feel at last that His love was more than a human love, even God's own love. Ideas, truths, principles, these are not lacking, but the essence of His power is not in them, for they have no power.—*T. T. Munger.*

(6) *Reasons why we can love an unseen Saviour.*

a. Because we are intimately acquainted with the beauty of His character.

[15246] In Jesus, as presented to us in the Gospels, we have everything to attract and retain the affections. In the writings of the Evangelists, we have His beautiful discourses, His striking parables, His casual remarks, all collected within a narrow compass, and a lively delineation of His conduct, with the particular incidents of it, by parties who lose sight of themselves in thinking of their Master, and never interpose to obstruct any of the light which comes from Him. We, as it were—so lively is the painting—see Jesus acting, and hear Him speaking, and that in a great variety of interesting and instructive circumstances. We see Him while with His disciples, and with the Jewish doctors; amidst the acclamations of the people, and amidst their execrations too; as He rejoiced over the conversion of sinners, and as He grieved over their hardness of heart; as He pitied His enemies, and as He wept over the grave of a friend. We have all this, in books so simple, that a child can understand them, and so brief, that a little space of time will enable any one to peruse them.—*McCosh.*

[15247] The tenderness and sensibility of Christ's human nature, as well as the holy love of His Divine nature, are brought before us in almost every incident of His life. We recollect how He fed the hungry and healed all manner of diseases; how He restored the young man, whose dead body was being carried out of the gates of the city of Nain, to the embraces of his mother; how He wept over the grave of Lazarus and the impending destruction of Jerusalem—and we run to Him as to one who feels for us under all our trials. We remember how He Himself was acquainted with grief, in its multiplied and diversified forms, in body and in spirit, inflicted by man and God; how He was often an hungered, without a home, or where to lay His head; how the tongue of calumny was raised against Him, and the finger of scorn pointed at Him; how the favours which He conferred were met by no corresponding gratitude; how an apostle betrayed Him, and the rulers of the nation condemned Him, and the

people demanded His crucifixion, and reviled Him in the midst of His dying agonies; how the Father Himself forsook Him;—and when we remember this, we feel that there is no sorrow of ours which He will not commiserate. The friendless rejoice, for they have a friend in Him; the helpless take courage, for their help is in Him; the forsaken lift up their head and are comforted, in communion with Him who was Himself forsaken.—*Ibid.*

b. Because the Being whom we are expected to love is constantly bestowing upon us His favours.

[15248] We are willing to grant that in ordinary circumstances distance has a tendency to lessen the regard which friends entertain towards one another; but when we have around us constant memorials of our friend, the influence of separation will be counteracted. When the bereaved mourner, when the widower, for instance, looks around his dwelling, and sees in every part of it the peculiar property, or perhaps the very workmanship, of a beloved consort; and when the widow sees in every child that clusters around her knee the image of a lost husband—they feel as if the departed were still present, and that amidst these memorials they can never forget those of whom they are so reminded. Now, the believer feels himself to be thus surrounded by memorials of God in His works—in the heavens and earth, and in His wonderful providence. The fact that God has made it add a new lustre to every star, a new beauty to every flower, and the meanest of the works of God carry up the mind to the great Creator. Distance, we acknowledge, has a tendency to lessen the affection of friends, but this influence may be overborne when the friend is ever bestowing substantial favours. The believer does not feel that God is absent, when he is constantly sustained by His power and fed by His bounty. The believer in Christ connects his very temporal mercies with the work and sufferings of his Saviour. "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation."—*Ibid.*

c. Because, though the object of his affection is invisible to the believer, there is yet provided a means of communication.

[15249] Granting that distance may tend to diminish the affection of friends, we find this influence lessened when they can correspond by letter, or have frequent opportunities of meeting. We are willing to acknowledge that the love of the believer would grow cold and languid were he shut out from all communication with his God. But, in gracious condescension, God engages to meet with those that love Him—not, indeed, in bodily presence, but not on that account the less truly, effectually, and comfortably; and love Him as they may, they are assured that He is loving them with a ten thousand-fold greater affection. It is one of the most beneficent of the effects of the gospel, that it provides for the renewal of that fellowship

with God which man had lost, but after which he is still aspiring in the deeper moods of his mind. In this communion there are all the elements to be found in the fellowship of a man with his neighbour. In human fellowships there are four elements—we speak to our neighbour, and he hears us; he speaks to us, and we hear him; and thus there is a thorough interchange of thought and feeling. There are the same elements in our fellowship with God when by faith we rise to it; we pour out our hearts before Him, and He listens to us; He condescends to instruct us, and we attend to the lessons which He is giving. With such means of communication available, the believer feels as if his Saviour were present with him always; and so far as he still feels that the communion is distant, so far as he still mourns an absent Lord, it is to desire more earnestly to reach that place where he shall enjoy still closer and unbroken communion.—*Ibid.*

## 2 By "putting on Christ."

### (1) *Force of the metaphor.*

[15250] This is one of those instances in which a sentiment is very powerful if it be taken in its metaphorical and imaginative form, but which becomes preposterous if it be changed, and if it be applied in its literal form. The Bible is full of such elements. A lamb, sitting on a throne, and holding a book, as a mere symbolical picture, is tolerable not only to us, but was far more than tolerable to antiquity, when sacrifices had rendered the lamb very much more significant of sacred things than it is now. And yet, if any of you have ever looked at the mediæval pictures where a lamb on a throne was painted, wool and all, with split hoofs and with horns, and trying to hold a book, they must have seemed very ludicrous to you. Nothing can be more ludicrous and nothing can be more repulsive to modern thought or to an educated taste than that. It requires a taste as conventional, on our part, and as artificial, to accept that, as the education we should require to understand a language different from that in which we were bred. So of almost all the prophetic symbols. While they remain in the air, and we attempt to think of them only pictorially and imaginatively, they are elements of power; but the moment you touch them with materializing reason you change that which was beautiful to that which is grotesque, and that which was powerful to that which is even disgusting. To conceive of the putting on of a person, as you would put on a coat or any other garment, at once suggests the picture of Æneas carrying on his shoulders Anchises, his father; but though it may be a work of great affection or humanity for one man to carry another on his back, it is not particularly attractive as a picture, and would not be particularly attractive as an exhortation to men to its universal imitation. We are to understand, therefore, that the figure carries simply the idea that we are to treat Christ as a garment; or, in other words, that we are to use our faith

in Christ as we should use raiment.—*Ward Beecher.*

### (2) *Meaning of the direction.*

[15251] Unite yourselves in the closest fellowship of life with Christ, so that you may wholly present the mind and life of Christ in your conduct.—*Meyer.*

[15252] He is said to put on Christ who by his outward life manifests the power of Christ which is within him. For like as men are seen and recognized by their garments and outward appearance, so by our outward walk do men see whether we are in very truth the servants of Christ.—*Royce.*

[15253] The command of the apostle (Rom. xiii. 14) to men (and it is represented elsewhere in Colossians) is, to make such a use of the Lord Jesus Christ that He shall stand to them as raiment does; as a covering and a protection, as continuously carried and as intimately connected with all their movements and the whole flow of their lives.—*Ward Beecher.*

[15254] The general conception which many have of religion is that it is the general purpose which one forms to live an ethical and moral life; that it is living a life of ethics superior to that which was known aforetime, and to that which is produced by the rude methods of secular society. But putting on the Lord Jesus Christ is more than that. When a man enters the Christian life he swears fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ as a soldier swears fidelity to his flag and to the commander that he is under. He undertakes to be governed by proper regulations, and to yield obedience to them with cheerful enthusiasm. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Leader; and there is to be on our part a yielding with alacrity to His wish and His will, not from a sense of duty alone, and not because if we do not obey Him ill will betide us, but from the primary and direct influence of an enthusiastic love.—*Ibid.*

### (3) *The way in which we are to comply with the requirements of this duty.*

[15255] By prayer and patience we are to obey His instruction, whether we occupy a conspicuous or an obscure position. Of course, after our painstaking efforts, we shall not perfectly succeed in putting on the character and life of the Saviour. But we must aim at this. Such is not presumption. Suppose a case: "You see a young artist seated with canvas and brushes before a picture by one of the chief painters. 'What! are you vain enough to think that you can paint as well as Titian or Turner?' If you asked this, he might very justly reply, 'No; but I hope by industry and care to make a very fair copy of the picture before me.' The same may be said of the Divine pattern and our attempts to become like Him" (T. R. Stevenson, "The Christian World Pulpit," vol. vi. p. 107). In order to comply with the apostolic instruction, the following directions, given by



the same writer, may be helpful : 1. *Study your part well*; keep your model before you; familiarize yourself with Him. Alexander the Great made Ulysses and Hector, with other Trojan and Greek heroes, his study. A copy of Homer, kept in a splendid casket, accompanied him in his travels and wars. He even slept with it under his pillow. Orators who have risen to eminence took care to acquaint themselves with Demosthenes and Cicero. David, the French artist, frequented the guillotine with paint and brush, in order that he might catch the exact expression of fear, agony, and death. Charles Dickens acquired much of his power by visiting all kinds of places, and observing the conduct of all manner of people. 2. *Attend to private preparation*. 3. *Be an enthusiast*. 4. *Encourage yourself with these thoughts*: (a) The Holy Spirit is your prompter; (b) Others have acted their part well; (c) Never mind, though you act badly at first; (d) You will secure Divine approval if you act your part well.—C. M.

### 3 By diligently serving Christ.

(1) *Description and requirements of the service to which Christians are called.*

a. A Christian in his service should be an honour to himself.

[15256] Let no one have any hesitation as to personal honour being appealed to in Christian service. False honour we cannot too much despise, true honour in the sight of God and His saints we cannot too earnestly covet. Righteous men are described in Scripture as "seeking for glory, and honour, and immortality," and are encouraged in duty by the assurance that in its faithful performance they shall "find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man." What can be more desirable than to hear the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant"? Such honour is to be sought after, and they are best who seek it most. A Christian in his service must be worthy of himself, worthy of the nature God has given him, worthy of his capabilities, worthy of his privileges, and worthy of his position and opportunities and means.—J. Pillars.

b. A Christian in his service must be useful to his Master and persistent in his duty.

[15257] "Meet for the Master's use;" that is, serviceable for the Master, useful for the Master. The word occurs in two other places in the New Testament, and its use in them may illustrate its meaning here. In one of them Paul says that Mark was profitable to him for the ministry. So must a Christian be useful to his Master. In the other he says that Onesimus who had before been unprofitable to Philemon, was now, since his conversion, profitable both to Philemon and to Paul. So must a Christian be profitable to his Lord. It is intimated in this view of our service that we do not work apart and alone as master-workmen, choosing our own work, choosing how to do it, and finishing and rounding it off by ourselves. We work under a Master, we receive our work at His hands,

we do it according to His directions, we do it under His eye, and when it is done we bring it to Him that He may put it to its proper use. It is the glory of a master-worker that he can use the services of a thousand workmen, give full scope to their faculties, and then by the use he makes of their work double its value. It is the glory of a general that he can so use the valour of his individual soldiers, and the strength of his separate regiments, as by his disposition of them to double their value. If it be so with man's use of man, how much more so with the Lord's use of man! How much value will be added to a man's life and work by the Master's use of them! It is not to be wondered at that good men have taken such delight in considering themselves as instruments in the Lord's hands for purposes far beyond their reach and even beyond their means. But what then? Is it, therefore, of little moment what service we render? Certainly not. They are ill-advised who make the Lord's greatness an excuse for man's indolence. Christ may use a bad servant by making him a beacon, but such service will neither be honourable to the servant nor profitable to the Master.—*Ibid.*

[15258] The question is not merely what we can *feel*, but what we can do for Christ; not how many tears we can shed, but how many sins we can mortify; not what raptures we can experience, but what self-denial we can practise; not what happy frames we can enjoy, but what holy duties we can perform; not simply how much we can luxuriate at sermon or at sacrament, but how much we can exhibit of the mind of Jesus in our intercourse with our fellow-men; not only how far above earth we can rise to the bliss of heaven, but how much of the love and purity of heaven we can bring down to earth; in short, not how much of rapt feeling we can indulge, but how much of religious principle we can bring to bear on our whole conduct.—J. Angel James.

[15259] To be doing good, to be seeking others' instruction, relief, moral elevation, present comfort, permanent well-being, is the real business of the Christian life. To make the household happy and comfortable, to consider the interests and claims of all dependents; to watch over the virtue of the exposed; to put children on the track of duty and usefulness; to listen to the cry of the needy; to remove stumbling-blocks from the path of those who must needs walk in darkness; to close up the pit into which anybody's sheep may fall; to give up the personal habit or the indulgence which betrays many into ruin; to guard the lips from what may injure the reputation, or pollute the imagination, or stimulate the vanity or prejudice the judgment or mislead the conduct of any human being; to seize the chance of serving any mortal creature as a glad opportunity of honouring God and humanity—this is the evidence of that love in the heart, and that ever active principle of obedience to Christ's

example, compared with which professions, and experiences, and prayers, and fervours of feeling are trifling and deceptive.—*Anon.*

[15260] If you cannot be great, be willing to serve God in that which is small. If you cannot do great things for Him, cheerfully do little ones. If you cannot be an Aaron to serve at the altar, or a Moses to guide the tribes, consent to be "a little maid" to Naaman the Syrian, for the honour of God's prophets, or a little child, for Christ's sake, to be set by Him in the midst of the people, as an illustration of the sweetness of humility.—*S. F. Smith.*

[15261] There is one thing that makes life mighty in its veriest trifles, worthy in its smallest deeds, that delivers it from monotony, that delivers it from insignificance. All will be great, nothing will be overpowering, when, living in communion with Jesus Christ, we say as He says, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."—*Alex. MacLaren, D.D.*

c. A Christian in his service should be "prepared unto every good work."

[15262] Prepared for good work. There are stages in goodness. There is good desire, the conception and digestion of the plan for carrying out the desire, the provision of means, and, last of all, the actual work. Every work of note has a history, and many works have long and strange histories from the dim dawning of desire to the doing of the work that embodied the desire. Goodness is required at every stage—in the desire, in the mental throes that attend the digestion of its plan, and in the resolve that issues in its execution; but there is a sense of incompleteness till the desire be embodied in deed. Desires that fail to reach to deed are like flowers nipped by the frost, children of promise laid in untimely graves. A life is complete when desire has had time to ripen into a plan, and a plan has been embodied in work. Now, Christ's servants must have all the stages of goodness from the first to the last, from the dim desire to the perfect work; the longing of desire, the pain of birth, and joy that a man has been born into the world. They must be men of large sympathies and desires, men skilful to plan, men bold and strong to execute their plans. Desire, thought, work, and work the fruit and crown of all.—*J. Pillans.*

[15263] The world is wide; human needs are great; God calls sinful men to a high destiny. The obstacles in the way are great and many; how great must the design be, and how manifold the work which embraces all. When our Lord entered into the chamber where the young daughter of Jairus lay dead, the mourners laughed Him to scorn. They imagined there was no help for such misery; and, standing on the ground of nature, they were right. What can men do for the dying? What can they do for the sinful? What can they do in any of the great sorrows and needs of mankind? Stand in on the ground of nature, the growing intelli-

gence and wealth of the world only make it more apparent that we are not prepared to render any aid. But our Master is prepared unto every good work, and He gives His servants power like His own. By the knowledge of Christ men are prepared to meet the entire range of human needs, and to take part in every good enterprise.—*Ibid.*

### (2) *Present sphere of Christian service.*

[15264] The sphere of beneficent activity was never so large. To infuse the leaven of purity into the disordered masses—to thaw the death-frost from the heart of the misanthrope—to make the treacherous one faithful to duty—to open the world's dim eye to the majesty of conscience—to gather and instruct the orphans bereft of a father's blessing and of a mother's prayer—to care for the outcast and abandoned, who have drunk in iniquity with their mother's milk, whom the priest and the Levite have alike passed by, and who have been forced in the hot-bed of poverty into premature luxuriance of evil—here is labour which may employ a man's whole lifetime and his whole soul.—*Dr. Punshon.*

### (3) *Its necessary preparation.*

[15265] Two considerations show the need of eminent personal worth as a preparation. First, we never do anything well till we have caught the spirit of it—till it possesses us—till we live in it, and find our joy in it. He does not work well who needs to be driven to it. He cannot work well who is sickly, and finds it a burden to live and breathe. Men are ill prepared for Christian service till their own Christianity be their glory and joy.—*J. Pillans.*

### (4) *Its blessedness.*

[15266] So sweet is God's service, that the more of it we can do, the more is our pleasure and honour and content. Other work spendeth strength; but this increaseth it. Other work must have recreation intermixed, but this is itself the most delightful recreation. Other service is undertaken for the love of the wages, but this is undertaken for the love of the Master and the work, and is wages itself to them that go through with it. For other service is but a means, and that to some inferior end; but this is a means to the everlasting perfection and blessedness of the soul, and such a means as containeth somewhat of the end.—*R. Baxter.*

### (5) *Its neglect.*

[15267] What strange servants some Christians are—always at work for themselves, and never doing anything for Him whom they call their Master!—*Nevins.*

### (6) *Connection between love and service.*

[15268] To love the Lord with all our might is to improve all the means we have, all the strength, all the ability that we have above others, to improve it so that we may serve the Lord with it more than others, that even as thou exceedest any in these abilities, so thou must go beyond them in serving the Lord. This is

to love the Lord with all thy might ; that is, to love Him so much more than a poor man, to bestow more on Him, to do more for Him, as thy riches make thee more able and more strong than another.—*J. Preston.*

[15269] Love is the root from whence voluntary obedience doth naturally grow ; if it be planted in our heart, we need not fear but that all kind of good fruit will sprout forth into conversation and practice. But without it we shall not ever perform any good work perfectly, steadily, in a kindly manner ; no other principle will serve, if we are only moved by whip and spur, driven on by fear or incited by hope, we shall go forward unwillingly and dull, often halting, ever flagging ; those principles which do put slaves and mercenaries on action, as they are not so noble and worthy, so neither are they so effectual and sure ; as ambition, vainglory, self-interest, design of security, of profit, of compliance with the expectation of men, &c. — *I. Barrow, D.D.*

[15270] Consider that as a principle of love is the main principle in the heart of a real Christian, so the labour of love is the main business of the Christian life.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

#### 4 By consistently following Christ.

##### (1) *The necessity of following Christ.*

To demonstrate the sincerity of our faith, love, and reverence.

[15271] It is the most natural way of testifying affection and respect to imitate the manners of those persons who are the objects of those acts and dispositions ; to esteem what they approve, to delight in what they affect, and consequently (since actions do proceed from affections) to do as they do. Contrary actions are plain arguments of contrary judgments, inclinations, and affections. Who can imagine we sincerely believe in Christ, or heartily love Him, or truly honour Him, that seeth us to loathe what He liked, or affect what He detested ; to condemn what He prized, or value what He despised ; to neglect what He pursued, or embrace what He avoided ? But if our lives resemble His, any man will thence collect our respect and affection to Him. This argument our Saviour doth also intimate : "By this," saith He, "shall all men know ye are My disciples, if ye love one another ;" that is, it will be an evident sign and strong argument that ye really do believe in, love and honour Me, if ye imitate Me in My charity.—*I. Barrow, D.D.*

##### (2) *The way in which we should follow Christ.*

[15272] We may all—with willing self-abandonment, with long toil, with burning zeal—through praise or blame, through success or failure, in peace or in agony of heart—follow Christ now, that we may see His face hereafter, and, whithersoever He goeth, be not found absent from His side.—*Archdeacon Farrar.*

[15273] Some men will follow Christ on certain conditions—if He will not lead them through

rough roads—if He will not enjoin on them any painful tasks—if the sun and wind do not annoy them—if He will remit a part of His plan and order. But the true Christian, who has the spirit of Jesus, will say, as Ruth said to Naomi, "Whither thou goest, I will go," whatever difficulties and dangers may be in the way.—*Anon.*

[15274] That flower that follows the sun doth so even in cloudy days ; when it doth not shine forth, yet it follows the hidden course and motion of it : so the soul that moves after God keeps that course when He hides His face ; is content, yea, is glad at His will in all estates, or conditions, or wants.—*Salter.*

[15275] If any one would give me the choice of all heaven, or the chain of St. Paul, I would instantly prefer St. Paul's chain to all heaven. If any one would give me a place among the angels above the heavens, or put me in the bottom of an obscure dungeon, prisoner with St. Paul, I would choose the prison and the chains. For, in fine, nothing is better than to suffer for Christ. I think St. Paul was not so happy in being caught up to the third heaven as in being loaded with chains. I had rather a thousand times be persecuted for Christ than to be honoured for Him. Persecution is an honour that surpasses and eclipses all other.—*Chrysostom.*

##### (3) *Encouragement to perseverance in this duty.*

[15276] Follow after Him though it may be at an immeasurable distance. Follow Him in His long endurance and His great humility. Follow Him with a bold and cheerful spirit in the happy and glorious victory which He won over sin and over death, and in the end thou shalt find in Him the true communion and fellowship which He only can give.—*Dean Stanley.*

#### 5 By perpetually abiding in Christ.

##### (1) *Meaning and use of the term "abide."*

[15277] The mystical use of the word "to abide," representing as it does the innermost fellowship and communion of the faithful with their Lord, and of their Lord with them, and occasionally representing a higher mystery still (John xiv. 10, xv. 10), is peculiar to St. John, but is very frequent both in his Gospel and in his Epistles, in the language of his Lord and in his own which he has learned from that Lord.—*Abp. Trench.*

##### (2) *Import of the act of abiding in Christ, with its method and means.*

[15278] What is meant by our abiding in Him ? This is called partaking of Him (Heb. iii. 14), and implies in it our—1. Being in Him (Rom. viii. 1 ; 2 Cor. v. 17). (1) By baptism (Rom. vi. 3 ; Gal. iii. 27, 28). (2) By obedience to His laws (Gal. v. 24). (3) By a true and sincere faith (Philip. iii. 8, 9). (4) By being members of His mystical body (Col. i. 18 ; Eph. v. 30). 2. Continuing in Him. (1) As a branch in the vine (John xv. 1-6). (2) In the profession



of His doctrine (John viii. 31). (3) By hearty endeavours after perfection (Col. i. 28).—*Bp. Beveridge*.

[15279] Abiding in Christ consists in (1) union, (2) communion, (3) imitation; and implies and involves dependence, obedience, and continuance (John xv. 5, 7, 10; Col. i. 23; Heb. iii. 14).—*Anon.*

[15280] There is one insect in South America which hovers around certain plants, and when at last it enters within their flowers, never again comes forth, but lives henceforth amid the beauty and fragrance of its new and accepted home. Thus a believer, once in sacred fellowship with Christ, should live henceforth in the full realization of this blessed state.—*Ibid.*

[15281] As we first consciously entered into fellowship with Christ by faith, so there is no other way to abide in Him but by repeated exercises of the same faith. The faith which enables the soul to abide in Christ is nothing else than an assured trust and confidence on our part, that, as He has already wrought out for us our acceptance with God, so He will work in us every gracious disposition which is necessary to qualify us for glory. It is not enough to supplicate these graces, we must lean upon Him for them, and fix the eye of expectation upon the promise of His new covenant: "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts;" very well assured that He will fulfil to us the terms thereof.—*Dean Goulburn*.

(3) *The indispensable necessity and supreme blessedness of abiding in Christ.*

[15282] First, because of the necessary dependence of our fruitfulness on abiding in Christ; for we can bear no fruit without Him. (1) We can do nothing acceptable without Him (Prov. xv. 8); because (2) We can do nothing in itself good without Him (John vi. 44; 2 Cor. iii. 5; Philip. ii. 13). For without Him (1) Our understandings are dark (Eph. v. 8; 1 Cor. ii. 14). (2) Our wills are perverse (Rom. i. 24; Jer. xvii. 9). But in Him we may abound in fruit; because if we be in Him, His spirit will diffuse itself into us. (1) Clearing our apprehensions (Eph. v. 8). (2) Reforming our judgments (Isa. v. 20). (3) Cleansing our hearts. (4) Rectifying our wills (Psa. cxix. 36). (5) Ordering our affections (Col. iii. 2). (6) Regulating our lives and actions (Psa. vii. 23). Second, because if we abide not in Him we shall be cast out; for without abiding in Christ (1) Our sins cannot be pardoned (Eph. i. 7). (2) Nor our lusts subdued (Matt. i. 21). (3) Nor God's wrath appeased (1 John ii. 1). Third, because if we abide in Him our prayers shall be granted; for (1) He will give us His Spirit to direct us what we should pray for (Rom. viii. 26, 27; John xvi. 26). (2) In Him we are interested in the promises (2 Cor. i. 20). (3) He will make intercession for us (Heb. vii. 25; John xv. 26, 27).—*Bp. Beveridge*.

## 6 By bearing the yoke of Christ.

*Nature of the yoke or burden of Christ which the Christian is called upon to bear.*

[15283] There is a burden that loads and is heavy; that of Christ comforts and is light, it resembles feathers; for if you take the feathers off a bird you take a weight from it, and the more of this weight you take away the less able he is to raise himself from the ground; he can't fly because you have taken away his load; give him his load again and he will not fail to fly. Such is the burden of Christ.—*Augustine*.

## LOYALTY TO GOD.

### I. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS.

[15284] Real steadfastness and godly fidelity, like good works, imply and presuppose belief and trust in God (see Lightfoot on Galatians, pp. 137, 152–156). Even among men a trusty person is a *trustful* person. One who has no faith in God or in his fellow-men is usually a person we are wise neither to employ nor confide in. The truth is taught us in the Norman French word *miscreant*, the meaning of which is *mis-believer*. "The relationship of *faith* to *faithfulness*," writes Jas. Morison, "is a most interesting connection. It is a relationship which still continues, and will continue while the world lasts—and a great deal longer. In whomsoever there is genuine *faith* in relation to the gospel and the God of the gospel, there will be true *faithfulness*. And in whomsoever, on the other hand, there is true *faithfulness* to conscience, in its relation to God and the gospel, there will, sooner or later, be genuine *faith*, at least in germ. Faithfulness and faith, when we go to the ultimates of things, imply one another."—*Saving Faith*.

### II. THE DIFFICULTY AND GLORY OF CONTINUING FAITHFUL.

[15285] To stand firm to principle amid reproach, steadily to separate abiding truth from its temporary counter-its, to resist ridicule and the strength of language often substituted for strength of argument, to throw on one side accusations of narrowness and ignorance, irritating as they are to a just self-respect, to rise superior to periodic fluctuations of opinion as ceaseless as the ebb and flow of the sea, and amid these various influences to maintain with singleness of heart and undistracted accuracy of eye the truth of God, is the most difficult of all conflicts and the most glorious of all victories.—*Alex. Maclaren, D.D.*

[15286] It irradiates all our days with lofty beauty, and it makes them all hallowed and Divine, when we feel that not the apparent greatness, not the prominence nor noise with which it is done, nor the external consequences

which flow from it, but the motive from which it flowed, determines the worth of our deed in God's eyes. Faithfulness is faithfulness, on whatsoever scale it be set forth.—*Ibid.*

### III. THE NECESSITY AND IMPORTANCE OF FIDELITY IN LITTLE THINGS.

#### 1 It is the sure test of character.

[15287] Morality is not a thing of magnitude, but of quality. Right is right and wrong is wrong as really in a small matter as in a great affair. We are so apt to judge from consequences, indeed, that we frequently account *that* the greatest sin from which the largest results appear to follow; while we make little or nothing of the evil which does not seem to us to be linked to important issues. But no character of actions has to be judged altogether apart from their consequences, and, when we weigh them thus beneath the exhausted receiver of God's law, from which the atmosphere of public opinion has been excluded, we see that evil in little things is just as really evil as it is in greater.—*W. M. Taylor.*

[15288] Character is more correctly indicated through little things than through great. For a man gets himself up on great occasions, and in so far as he puts this strain upon himself he ceases to be truly himself. In little things there is no such constraint upon him, and his real self becomes apparent. You get the best likeness of a man when he is unconscious that you are taking it. Hence it is that so many photographic portraits are stiff, stately, unnatural, and altogether different from their originals. The "sitter" knew that his likeness was being taken, and he tried to look the best, thereby failing to be natural, and just himself. Now it is the same in moral things. It is when one is unconscious of making any effort that he is most thoroughly himself. If you want to know the character of a man, you will not ask what he is on state occasions and review days, when he is upon his guard; but you will follow him to his home, and mark what he is to his wife, or to his children, or to his valet. In the little details of domestic life he will unconsciously reveal himself; and this revelation, just because of its unconsciousness, is infallibly correct.—*Ibid.*

[15289] Perigeaux showed his shrewdness when he read the careful character of Lafitte through such a tiny thing as the stooping to pick up a pin from the garden-walk; and those old Covenanters were wise in their generation who detected a spy in their cave from the fact that he did not ask a blessing on the food which their kindness set before him. Now it is thus we are revealing our characters every day—not only to our fellow-men, but to the eye of the all-searching God; and, in the light of this solemn consideration, who among us is not disposed to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Not by what we do and say on the special occasions of the Sabbath and the Lord's

Supper is Jehovah testing us. He is reading us as we reveal ourselves in the minute details of our daily business and domestic life; and by such things as the giving or refusing of "a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of a disciple" we shall find that we shall be judged at last.—*Ibid.*

#### 2 It is the preservative of character.

[15290] No man ever became heinously wicked all at once. The revelation of character may be sudden, but its growth is gradual; and when the world is startled by the intelligence of some dreadful crime it will usually be found that the person who had been guilty of it has been for long years descending step by step to the depth of infamy which he has reached. Two different lines of rails issuing from the same station may run very near to each other at the first; but at length the divergence may be so great that half a continent may lie between their termini. So the paths of right and wrong may seem to be at the outset almost parallel; but at last the end of the one is at the throne of God, and that of the other in the place of Woe. Yet the distance is passed over *in single steps*, each of which seems only a little thing to him who is taking the fatal journey. At the outset, with much shrinking of heart and upbraiding of conscience, one small evil is committed; but, this step taken, the foot is already lifted for a second, which seems no greater than that which went before; and so, by degrees, the sinner presses forward in his career of wickedness.—*Ibid.*

[15291] There is no security save in withstanding beginnings. Especially be on your guard against depreciating the importance of conscientiousness in small affairs; for by the commission of minor evils the enamel of the conscience is broken, and its sensitiveness may be ultimately destroyed. What a difference there is between Lot as you see him offering sacrifice to God with Abraham at the altar of Bethel, and as he was on that day when, hurried by the angel's hand from the burning Sodom, he was saved from its destruction, "yet so as by fire!" Would you know how all this has come about? I think I see an indication of that which caused it all in a question uttered by Lot even in the hour of his deliverance. He said to the angel in regard to Zoar, "Is it not a little one?" Depend upon it, that was not the first occasion on which Lot used these words. It had become a habit with him to employ them. When his servants quarrelled with Abraham's, and he had to choose a separate encampment for himself, he looked over the plain of Jordan, and saw that it was well watered and good for flocks. "But Sodom is in it," whispers conscience, "Isn't that a little thing?" replies Lot. "I need not go into the city unless I please." So "he pitched his tent toward Sodom." Once there, it was another "little thing" to go into the city; and, when he became a resident within its walls, it was another "little

thing" to allow his children to intermarry with its citizens. And this is the end of it, as, deprived of his flocks and herds, bereaved of his wife and all his children save his two daughters, he is hastened forward to a deliverance which he owed not to his own desert, but to Abraham's intercession. Is there nothing in all this to arouse us to the importance of fidelity in little things, and to evoke from us the prayer of David: "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thine me from secret faults."—*Ibid.*

### 3 It is a prophetic pledge of future salvation.

[15292] This is well understood by men in their business affairs. When a merchant has a vacancy in his establishment, he promotes to it that one of his servants who in the post which he has been occupying has displayed the greatest measure of fidelity and perseverance; and, when a youth applies for a situation, the success of his application will depend on the report which his former employer gives regarding him or on the record which he has written for himself in school. But it is not otherwise in the providence of God. Those who fill best the spheres in which they have been placed are, in general, those who are in the long run advanced to higher positions; while they who despise the small things of their present duties are left to sink into still deeper obscurity. This is not, indeed, invariably the case in this life, for there are anomalies in the present dispensation which are to us inscrutable; but all these shall disappear hereafter, and those who have been most faithful in the least things of the present life shall have the loftiest spheres of service in the life that is to come. I do not say, indeed, that this position shall come to them because of any merit in their fidelity, for it is of the grace of God through Jesus Christ that any reward will be given to any man; but, this being conceded, the parable of the talents seems to me to teach that the principle on which rewards will be distributed will be that each shall receive according to his works—that is, according to the degree of faithfulness which he has manifested in the discharge of duty here. We are thus each not only making ourselves for eternity, but also making the places which we are each to fill throughout its endless cycles.—*Ibid.*

## IV. THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF THAT FAITHFULNESS WHICH UTILIZES THE LOWEST GIFT AS A MEANS OF POSSESSING THE HIGHEST.

### 1 The principle of stewardship.

[15293] The consciousness of having nothing that we have not received, of having received nothing for our very own, to be used according to our own will, the ever-present sense of obligation to administer our master's goods as he would, and for his purposes, must be clear and active in us if we are to be "faithful." "Of Thine own have we given Thee" is to be always

our conviction, for all is God's—His before it was ours, His whilst it seems ours, and His by a new right when we give it back to Him.—*Thornley Smith.*

[15294] One of the plainest duties of stewardship is that we bring conscience and deliberate consideration to bear upon our administration of this world's goods. We are not faithful stewards if we spend according to our own whim and fancy, and let our "charity" depend, as it so often does, on little better than accident or habit. We are stewards in regard to what we spend on ourselves and our families, as well as in what we spend for purposes beyond ourselves; our personal and domestic expenditure, our savings and our gifts, and the proportion between them should all equally pass under the inspection of deliberate conscience. If that were once thoroughly understood and practised by us, we should be very different people, and there would be very different results from many an appeal that is made to us. Stewardship means deliberation, and intelligent consideration, and conscientious disposal and administration as of a fund that is not mine but is put into my hand.—*Ibid.*

### 2 The principle of sacrifice.

[15295] That is the fundamental law of the Christian life, and it must be applied especially in this region of outward possessions, where the opposite law of selfishness works most strongly. How much owest thou unto thy Lord? All things, and "thine own self besides." So, touched by the mercies of God, we should bring in glad surrender ourselves, and our all, as thank-offerings to Him by whose bitter sacrifice we are reconciled to God, and put in possession of ourselves and of all else. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive riches."—*Ibid.*

### 3 The principle of brotherhood.

[15296] Brotherhood Christianity is not communism, but it will do all that communism tries to do. Property is not theft, but property selfishly administered is theft. We are but distributing agents, and we have a right to take a commission and to keep ourselves, but we have no right to anything more. What we call our own is in this sense, too, another's, and belongs to our brethren, because it, and they, and we, all belong to God. We get everything in order that we may transmit it to others. We are all bound together by such subtle and close ties that each is laid under obligation to share his portion with his neighbour. Whether it be outward goods or faculties of the mind or heart, wisdom, or sympathy, or the yet higher gifts of the gospel that redeems, we receive that we may impart—

"The least flower with a brimming cup may stand  
And share its dewdrop with another near."  
—*Ibid.*



V. THE VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH LOYALTY TO GOD MAY BE MANIFESTED, THEREIN DISPLAYING THE INDISPENSABLE REQUISITES FOR ITS STEADFAST MAINTENANCE.

1 By a godly life and conversation.

(1) *Meaning of the term and import of true godliness.*

[15297] Godliness (*εὐσέβεια*) is made up of two terms, the one signifying *well* or *rightly*, the other reverence or respect. In the New Testament, except in one place (and there it is the corresponding verb that occurs), it is invariably used to express that feeling of devout reverence, mollified by affectionate trust, which the pious soul entertains towards God—the heavenly parent.—*W. Trail.*

[15298] Godliness is that outward deportment which characterizes a heavenly temper.—*G. Crabb.*

[15299] There is in the term godliness something definite which we are to cultivate as an element of the religious life. What, then, is that godliness which is capable of being nurtured as an addition to saving faith in Christ? Some understand the term in the old English sense of *God-like-ness*; a moral resemblance to God—an assimilation to Him in character. But this does not express the objective sense conveyed in the original word (2 Pet. i. 6). *Godward-ness*, if we might make such a term, would be nearer this than *God-like-ness*—a state of mind which is *toward* God, as the sole object of its adoration and religious reverence, the central, supreme object of its trust and love, the final source of moral obligation and authority. The word is compounded of two—one signifying to fear or reverence; the other rightly or well—it means, therefore, a right or good reverence toward God.—*J. P. Thompson.*

[15300] Atheism is godlessness; the ungodly are without God; they have no fear of God before their eyes; no awe of the Divine presence; no reverence for the Supreme Being; no acknowledgment of obligation toward Him; no regard for His law. Superstition regards as Divine powers and agencies things which really lie within the course of nature and the powers of man; it carries to excess and absurdity the spirit of religious veneration, applying to mere natural objects and events, or human persons, or imaginary things, the sentiment of reverence which God alone should command. Between atheism—the absence of all recognition of God and all reverence for a higher power—and superstition, a weak and credulous belief in preternatural powers and agencies, which causes the mind to fear and venerate creatures of sense or of imagination as if these were God—between those opposite poles lies true godliness or Godwardness—a just reverence toward God, which controls our moral conduct by the love and the fear of God. This I take to be the meaning of

godliness. And this you will perceive may be grafted upon faith, along with other virtues and graces, as a distinct element of the Christian character of life.—*Ibid.*

[15301] It supposes knowledge, veneration, affection, dependence, submission, gratitude, and obedience; or it may be reduced to these four ideas: *knowledge* in the mind, by which it is distinguished from the visions of the superstitious; *rectitude* in the conscience, that distinguishes it from hypocrisy; *sacrifice* in the life, or renunciation of the world, by which it is distinguished from the unmeaning obedience of him who goes as a happy constitution leads him; and lastly, *zeal* in the heart, which differs from the languishing emotions of the lukewarm.—*Saurin.*

(2) *Distinction between the terms "godly" and righteous.*

[15302] The godly man is he who has a mind which habitually converses with God, as in prayer, meditation, the reading and study of the Scriptures, public worship, and a temper consonant with such things. The righteous man is he who practically recognizes righteousness; that is, that morality which is based upon revealed religion, doing that which is right, as being in conformity with the Divine will.—*C. J. Smith.*

(3) *The comprehensiveness of that godliness to which the promise of blessing is attached.*

[15303] Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come; but then it is not godliness without other things, but with them; a good and holy man is not to expect to succeed, by the favour of God, without either industry or ability; God's blessing is not to be looked for as a substitute for these.—*J. A. James.*

(4) *Its essential characteristic.*  
Veneration.

[15304] The veneration of the Christian mind for God is not a dim awe of invisible power, a dread of that Almighty force which heaped up the mountains and gave the sea its bounds, which utters its voice in the heavens, and shakes terribly the earth. The veneration of the Christian for his God is a reverence for that which is greater than physical force, however sublime and terrible, even the greatness of a good and just and holy character; a reverence which does not arise from nervous tremor, or some terror of the imagination, but is seated in the intellect and in the heart; a reverence which is proportioned, not to ignorance, but to intelligence; which does not feed itself upon mystery, but increases with the right knowledge of God. Compared with such a reverence as this, the sentimental adoration of poets for the divinity they see in mountains and waterfalls, in clouds and forests, in tempests and the sea, is as empty of godliness as is the rudest superstition of pagan minds. Godliness springs from

[5304—15308]

an appreciation of the character of God, especially in that feature of it which least impresses the senses or the natural mind—its perfect, infinite, and unchanging holiness. It is an appreciative regard for this as the highest grandeur of the universe; it is an intelligent love of this, as the glory of the Divine nature, which lies at the root of all true godliness.—*J. P. Thompson.*

(5) *The general marks by which it may be distinguished.*

a. A godly man has God in all his thoughts—as the first and the last; at once the centre and circumference of all he does and says and thinks.

[15305] To such an one, God is in all things. The face of nature, whether it smiles with sunlit beauties, or is darkened with the shadows of the tempest, is seen to reflect His glory. The upper expanse, hung with star-lamps, which have never paled their light since the first day their Creator kindled them; and the vernal landscape, where the patient cattle walk as on a soft carpet, browsing the tender grass, with which their bounteous Food-giver has clothed the fields; and the liquid element, whether it rises gurgling from the springs, or rolls along the channels of the rivers, or ebbs and flows in the tides of ocean, or distils in gentle showers from the clouds—in all these, and in every part of universal nature, the godly man traces the handiwork and realizes the presence of God. And also in every process of nature—when the dewdrops fall at the opening and the shut of day, or when the sun rises and sets, or when returning spring brings back the winged emigrants to their leafing groves, or when the first flakes of winter come floating down on the cold breath of northern winds—in all these phenomena of nature, which are the effect of ascertained second causes, the godly man sees none the less the operative presence of God, the great First Cause. And as in the aspects and the processes of nature, so in the events of providence does the godly man perceive the finger of God. The event may be great or small—some dire calamity which spreads a whole nation with gloom, or some slight disaster which is confined to a single household: it may be the birth of an heir to a throne, or the birth of but a peasant child: yet in every event, whether the historian deems it worthy of a place on his pages or not, the godly man recognizes a special providence.—*W. Trail.*

[15306] The very falling of a sparrow, or the dropping of a tree-leaf, has a sacredness in his eye. For that sparrow fell not, that leaf did not drop from its bough, without its Father's knowledge. And so all history, even when it chronicles the deeds of unholy men, or may have been written by an unholy pen, is a solemn record, and has a sacred significance to a godly man; for to him, God is in history, making the wrath of man to praise Him; and out of human evil evolving superhuman good. And what, above all, makes providence so solemn, so

sacred, so mysteriously sublime to a godly man, is its connection with the cross of Christ. There, to his eye, all events have their centre. To him the pole-star of providence shines there. From it he has seen all good to flow, and by it, he believes, all evil shall be overcome. Taking his stand-view at the cross, a godly man sees all providence to be a Divine unfolding of the mystery of Christ's death—itsself, of all events, the divinest.—*Ibid.*

b. A godly man takes a comprehensive view of God—in His nature, His perfections, His operations, and the relations in which He stands to His creatures.

[15307] Not that any mind, even the most godly, can take an adequate view, or form a complete conception, of God. For, "who by searching can find out God? who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Can the finite think to measure the Infinite? or the creature of a day to sum the years of the Eternal? or beings who have to move from place to place ever fully to grasp the idea of Omnipresence? or those whose existence is conditional and circumscribed clearly to comprehend the Absolute? No; the human mind can never reach to a complete conception of God. But still the godly man strives to form a comprehensive view of Him. Thus, though he can never adequately conceive of God's attributes, he takes care to include them all in his conceptions of Him. He does not allow himself to dwell on His mercy to the exclusion of His justice, nor upon His patience to the oversight of His holiness and truth. And so of the operations of God; though it is but little of them we can understand, yet the godly man seeks to embrace all of them in his thoughts of God. For while redemption has to him its special attractions, he does not allow even redemption to turn him aside from studying providence. Nor does he watch the evolutions of providence, without also admiring the wonders of creation. And so of the relations in which God stands to His creatures, the godly man seeks to embrace all of these, when he thinks of that Being who is at once his Creator, his Preserver, his Sovereign, his Saviour, and his Judge.—*Ibid.*

[15308] One of the most prolific causes, and one of the most dangerous forms of error, is partial truth. If an animal wander into the Grotto del Cane it is almost instant death to it, because of the mephitic gas which stagnates on the floor; whereas a man may enter the cavern with impunity, since he stands higher than the gaseous deposit. Now, sheer error, like the poisonous gas, has, so to speak, a specific gravity which keeps it from rising above the lowest parts of society, where it is only the lowest natures that breathe its deadly poison. But when a current of atmospheric air mixes with the mephitic vapour, then do its deadly particles float abroad to drop pestilence on the surrounding neighbourhood. And even so does error, when mixed with truth, no longer stagnate

with its own weight in the lower parts of society; but it is carried abroad to poison the general community. And thus it has been that partial truth, or a mixture of truth with error, has done infinitely more mischief than error by itself would ever have wrought. Of this, abundant illustrations may be found in the heresies in doctrine, and the abuses in worship, and the false notions of nature, which have arisen from partial views of God, as to His character, operations, and the relation in which He stands to His creatures. These views being partial are not of course true; yet they have just enough of truth in them to give them currency, and so, greatly to enlarge the sphere of their baneful operation.—*Ibid.*

[15309] In forming and fixing his resolutions; in projecting and pursuing his plans of life; in his every-day avocations as well as in his more solemn Sabbath duties—in all these the mind of the godly man is occupied with a realizing sense of his dependence upon God, and of the obligation which lies on him to live to God's glory. Are my purposes in unison with God's designs? my secret thoughts what God would approve? and will this which I am about to undertake advance God's glory? It is thus the godly man interrogates himself—making God the first and the last in all his thoughts; and only when with Him they begin, and with Him they end, does the pious soul find satisfaction or repose.—*Ibid.*

c. A godly man is filled with solemn, reverential thoughts of God and of all that pertains to Him.

[15310] It is as from the dust he lifts his soul, awe-struck with solemnity, to contemplate the Divine Majesty. And when, in some contemplative moment, he is borne away on the wings of thought through the stretches of immensity, till he stands as if on the threshold of the great invisible temple, how his soul trembles as it enters in to hold communion with Him who is the Divinity of that awful shrine. Or when standing on some lone spot, at evening's silent hour, he looks up to the spangled floor of heaven, a thousand thoughts, overwhelmingly awful, come rushing in his mind as he whispers to himself, There, on His star-supported throne, sits my God. And above all, when he realizes himself to be a sinner, how does he prostrate his soul in shame and sorrow in the presence of Him who is of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity."—*Ibid.*

[15311] To approach His footstool in prayer—to lift up to Him the voice in holy song—to enter His courts where His saints assemble, or to engage in any act of devotion, whether private or public, whether in outward visible form or in the secret unuttered breathings of the heart—how very solemn do these appear to the godly man! Is it for such as me (he will say), with these polluted lips of mine, to utter His thrice-

holy name? Is it for me, with these feet, which have so often walked in the paths of folly, to tread His holy courts? Is it for me, with this poor wayward heart of mine, so fiftful in its emotions, and so faithless in its love; or with this poor wandering mind of mine, which any passing shadow is enough to turn aside—is it for me, with a heart so wayward, and a mind so wandering, to worship the great God?—*Ibid.*

d. A godly man has hope and confidence.

[15312] There is, in the breast of a godly man, a most trustful, confiding love—a most gentle, quiet, childlike hopefulness in God. It is this, indeed, which constitutes the very essence of godliness. For reverence without affection, fear without love, devoutness without trust, solemnity without submission, is not piety. But these combined and mingled in their just proportions—even as the primal colours, when mixed in one, make up a colourless, white sunbeam—constitute that holy state of mind which in apostolic language is called godliness.—*Ibid.*

e. A godly man thinks not of God as the absent or the unseen one, for by faith he seeth Him who is invisible, and by that faith draweth nigh to Him that is afar off.

[15313] The eye of sense can range the material universe, though it reaches not to the limits of that universe; for there glimmers many a distant star, visible doubtless to some gazers, but invisible to us. The eye of reason, or the vision of the intellect, can range the mental universe; it can pierce deeper, and soar higher, and expatiate over a vaster field, than sense can do, yet it also has its limits. For while reason, lifting up its eye, can trace upon the heavens the imprints of Jehovah, it has not strength nor clearness of vision to behold His very Godhead, or to gaze upon His personal glory. It may descry that halo of light, created and uncreated, which circles His throne; but Himself, who sitteth on the throne, of whom that light is but the Shekinah, it cannot descry. Faith, faith alone, can see the Invisible. It only can pierce the veil. To it, and not to sense or to reason, is given to approach the throne, and behold Him who, seated thereon, inhabiteth the praises of eternity. What an insight faith must have into the nature and character of God! . . . It sees God not only great when maintaining the high prerogative of His authority, and all the high sanctities of truth and justice; but as great, yea, even greater, when He extends mercy to the chief of sinners, causing His sceptre to be respected as a sceptre of righteousness by the holiest beings in the universe, while at the very time it is extended in peace and as a protection to those who have rebelled against Him. And if such are the amazing aspects of the Divine glory which faith beholds, is it strange that the soul of the godly man, when filled with such views, is stirred with mingled feelings of reverence and love when he can say, This God is my God?—*Ibid.*



f. To the godly man afflictions do not obscure, but rather the more clearly reveal, the majesty and love of God.

[5314] Say one is stretched on a sick bed, not able, perhaps, to lift his head from his pillow, or, except in faintest whispers or by feeble signs, to make his wants known to those weeping friends who surround his couch, what a lesson to them, and to him still more so, is this of human weakness! Perhaps he is in the very prime of his manhood; a few days ago, and the bloom of young health was on his cheek, but now there he lies weaker than an infant. Surely, if it is a Christian who is thus laid low, his soul will become filled with views of God's great majesty, such as he never saw before. How great is that Being in whose hand he is! how easy it were for *Him* to lay him still lower, to bring him down by a simple word of His mouth even to the grave! This is what God *could* do, and what yet He *may* do; but what, meanwhile, *is* He doing? He is watching, and tending, and supporting this, His sick child, who lies stretched on that lowly couch. Oh! what a view of the Divine Majesty is here, when the very God of heaven is seen by His suffering child bending over his lowly pillow, through the long hours of a restless day, and the still longer hours of a sleepless night, to soothe his fears and heal his pains!—*Ibid.*

[5315] Afflictions, in whatever form they come, are like a curtain dropped from heaven to earth, closing in the soul with God, and shutting out the world. What time the evening begins to fall, the landscape with its woods and waters, its flowers and trees, its vales and lofty hills, fades from the sight: but up yonder, in the darkling firmament, a solitary star comes out, and as the darkness deepens, still more brightly shines that evening star. So is it with affliction, when it falls upon a pious soul. Then is *its* hour of night, when the spirit-shadows of darkness gather round it, and the world, like the landscape, is shut out. But there heaven-high, up in the very darkness, like the star of evening, God's loving eye is seen to shine; and the soul, which in prosperity perhaps saw it not, cannot but see it now.—*Ibid.*

g. In all holy ordinances, and in every means of grace, the godly man seeks God Himself.

[5316] Who more than David prized the sanctuary and all its services? The tabernacle was amiable in his eyes—a place he loved, not with a mere local attachment, but rather as one would love some dear friend. But why was the tabernacle so amiable to David? And why did he love it thus? Not for itself—not even for its associations; but because in it he met with God. “My soul and my heart crieth out for the living God.” Ordinances he prized, as well he might: still he felt them to be only the means, not the end—most fitting instruments of good to his soul, but not the efficient agent who worketh that good—the symbols of truth, but not the truth itself, and still less He who is the source of truth

—channels for the waters of life to flow in, but not these living waters themselves—a spiritual atmosphere to transmit, and transfuse, and colour with hues of variegated beauty the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, but not that Sun itself. While therefore prizing ordinances, David did not rest satisfied in them as the ultimatum of his spiritual aspirations. In them he rested not; but by them he rose to God. Here, when having got above the means, he reached the end—when, higher up than the shadows, he found the substance—when guided by the hand of God his soul attained to God Himself: here David, as ever is the case with the godly man, found himself at rest and satisfied. “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”—*Ibid.*

h. The piety of the godly man is not merely contemplative, but also practical and operative.

[5317] If he is no formalist, so neither is he a devotee. Much of his religion consists in piety and sentiment; but it does not wholly consist of these. It has an inner, secret sphere, even the voiceless temple of the heart, where no eye, but the eye of the All-seeing, and no ear, but the ear of the All-hearing, is privy to its worship. But it has also an outer sphere—even the visible platform of daily life, on which it manifests itself to our fellow-men. There are, it is to be feared, those, and their number is not small, who reckon that piety has nothing else to do than to sing psalms, and offer up prayers, and listen to the preacher's voice. But this mere sanctuary, Sabbath-day religion, what is it but a cheap hypocrisy, by which some men would gain themselves a reputation for piety by what costs them very little? And there are those, even among God's own people, who are apt to let their piety dream itself away in musings, and distil its whole substance into mere emotions. But what better is this than a selfish sentimentality, when the mind gives itself up to its own pleasing reveries, and dwells apart in the hermitage of its own secluded contemplations, as if there were none to live for, except itself?—*Ibid.*

[5318] So far from being a mere contemplation of the spirit, true godliness is also, and still more, a consecration of body and spirit to the glory of God and the good of His creatures. It has its hymns of praise, but one of these is a holy life. It has its sacrifices, and, chief among these, are self-denying labours. It has its incense, and that of sweetest odour is the breath of charity. It has its prayers, but these are not all petitions: they are, besides, the aspirations of the soul, when willing to spend and be spent for Christ. Such is godliness here, on the earth; and such will it be in heaven. For eternity will be one endless round of song and of service—one unpausing succession of minstrelsy and of ministration.—*Ibid.*

(6) *Modes of its expression.*

a. By reverence for the being of God when we approach Him in prayer.

[15319] The prayers of godly men recorded in the Old Testament are always marked with a deep sentiment of reverence. Abraham and Moses, and Samuel and David, with all their importunity in supplication, were filled with reverence and godly fear when they drew nigh to God in prayer. Some seem to imagine that such reverence belonged to the dimness and mystery of the earlier Revelation, and that through Christ we have more free and familiar converse with God. Blessed be God, we have the freest access to His mercy-seat, and may come even with boldness—with unfaltering confidence, to the throne of grace. "God hath sent forth His Spirit into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." But has not filial piety the element of reverence as well as of love? With what reverence did Christ Himself approach the Father in prayer! "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me. . . . O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee. . . . Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done." What reverence, what submission, what godliness is here! "In the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared," or, as the margin reads, was heard for His piety: this filial veneration and submission brought to Him succouring angels from the presence of His Father. And if Christ so prayed, surely reverence becomes us sinners before God. The godly man will always be reverential in prayer. —*J. P. Thompson.*

b. By reverence for the name of God

[15320] A promised sign of the return of Israel to God's favour was this: "They shall sanctify My name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel." So in the time of Ezekiel, when the people were in captivity, Jehovah said, "I have pity for My holy name. . . . and I will sanctify My great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes." "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." This reverence for the name of God was not peculiar to His guardianship over Israel as a nation. Has not the Saviour taught us to pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven, *hallowed* be Thy name"? The ancient Jews had a superstitious reverence for the proper name of Jehovah, which forbade them to pronounce or even to write it. Indeed, some critics are of opinion that by reason of this superstition we have lost the true spelling and pronunciation of the name of the great I AM, as given to Moses. My own Jewish teacher in the Hebrew tongue, on coming to the name Jehovah in the Old Testament,

would invariably pause and pass it in reverential silence. A Mohammedan who cannot read will carefully preserve every scrap of writing which he may find, lest it should contain the name of God, which it would be blasphemy to mutilate. While we disavow such superstition, let us cherish a true reverence for the name of God. Those who have once been profane, when truly converted, show the genuineness of their change by the deep reverence of their minds for the name of the Lord. How much of this appears in the writings of John Newton and John Bunyan, who were once accustomed to profane the name of the Lord! The godly man will never use lightly the name of Jehovah to enliven an anecdote or point a joke.—*Ibid.*

c. By reverence for the law of God as the supreme and final rule of moral action.

[15321] "Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee." It is one thing to be in terror of the law of God as the symbol of His government over us, and of its penalties as threatened upon the disobedient, and quite another to revere that law in our hearts for its intrinsic holiness and purity, and as a written expression of the character of God. The Israelites had such a terror of the concomitants of the law at Sinai, the thunder and lightning, and smoke and earthquake, and the voice of the trumpet, that they cried to Moses, "Let not God speak with us, lest we die." But when these outward demonstrations at the giving of the law subsided, and Sinai smiled in peace, under the cloudless sun, and its own resplendent cloud, now silent, grew familiar, so utterly wanting were they in reverence for the law of God that they violated its first commandment, and made a molten calf in the very face of Him who had said, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." It is one thing to fear law, as law with penalty, and another to reverence God in His law.—*Ibid.*

d. By a profound reverence for the will of God as manifested in His providence.

[15322] If that will calls to suffering, the godly heart will say, "Let the Lord do that which is good in His sight;" "I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it." The godly mind rises above all secondary causes in nature, and all intermediate human agencies, to perceive and acknowledge the hand of God in its afflictions, and with deepest humility and reverence to say, "Father, Thy will be done." This submissiveness is not a passive bending of the mind to the necessity of its condition; it is a calm and even blissful acquiescence in the will of God, as the highest manifestation of good. If the will of God calls us to action, our devout inquiry will be, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? The mind which has enthroned God in its thoughts, affections, purposes, as the one object of its reverence, the centre and source of authority, can have no desire or plan for itself but to know the will of God. Such an one has "meat to eat" that the world knows not of.

The will of the Father becomes incorporated with his very being—his life, his strength, his abiding joy.—*Ibid.*

(7) *The motives to its exercise.*

a. The nature of God.

[15323] Could we but form a conception of God as revealed in the Scriptures, surely we must bow reverently and walk softly before Him. Great as is this material universe whose orbs are yet uncounted by the telescope, whose distances are yet unmeasured by the calculus, it is but the word of the Almighty. Great as is the universe of mind, from man up through angel and archangel to the incomprehensible seraphim, this is but the breadth of the Almighty. But in His holiness we behold a grandeur greater than in His essence, and before that all heaven adores. Cherubim and seraphim bow with reverence, not before the mere presence of Jehovah, but before Him whose holiness shames even the purity of their natures, and awes souls untouched by sin.—*W. Trail.*

b. The thought of a future judgment.

[15324] "As the barometer foretells the storm, so something in us"—conscience, when we do wrong, and our guilty fears—gives intimation sure of a future judgment. This is evidence enough. We find in it, and should not be ashamed to own it, a potent motive to the fear of God, and a life of piety. Assured we may be that a doctrine so supported, which Christ Himself taught and emphasized, is worthy of practical influence with us. While won by the love of Christ, and owing it, perhaps, the greatest motive, we should remember God's righteous anger for sin, and stimulate ourselves sometimes to "the obedience and faith of the gospel" by saying to ourselves, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," and, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Because of inevitable death; "because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets; when the silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl is broken;" because "the dust shall then return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it;" and because "God shall bring every work into judgment," we are to fear God, and keep His commandments.—*A. W. C.*

[15325] St. Peter brings Jehovah before us in the grandeur and terror of that day, when at His coming the heavens shall pass away, the elements shall melt; and with that picture in view, he asks, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" The early Christians lived much in the fear of God, because they regarded the advent of Christ and the day of judgment as always impending. And surely, for every one of us, those scenes of majesty and glory to which prophetic Scripture points, are drawing daily nearer and nearer still.—*W. Trail.*

c. The blessedness of godliness here and hereafter.

[15326] "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." "Godliness with contentment is great gain." "What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease, and his seed shall inherit the earth. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." Such Scriptures do not promise material riches and earthly honours as the absolute and uniform possession of those who fear God; but they do insure God's blessing upon those virtues of industry and temperance and frugality which godliness enjoins; they do insure the protecting love and the favouring providence of Jehovah. The fear of the Lord in the heart brings the favour of the Lord upon the life. Godliness is peace; godliness is stability; godliness is fellowship with the Infinite, and it brings to the soul the resources of Jehovah's love as its present and available possession. "All this is mine," said the nobleman to the peasant, pointing proudly to castle and park, and meadows and well-tilled acres. "And heaven, too?" meekly asked the peasant whose portion was in the skies. Without God, Dives is in want of all things.—*Ibid.*

[15327] What is gain? The worldly man says money: the word of God says godliness. What can money do? Can it cure an aching head? Can it ease an aching heart? Can it scare away disease? Can it restore health to the sickly frame, or hope to the hopeless heart? Ah, no! It may purchase a softer pillow to nurse the pain; it may secure a more experienced physician to battle with the disease; it may find a sunnier clime, in which the wasted frame may pine and languish till it be laid to rest in its long home; but there the power of money ends. How is it with godliness? It cannot purchase the softer pillow. Yes, it can. It can place the aching head, the aching heart, on the pillow—the soft, the downy pillow of contentment. "Father, not my will, but Thine be done." It can secure the services of the Great Physician and the balm of Gilead—the hand that heals both soul and body. It can waft the wearied heart, that feels the pangs of suffering, the inroads of disease, or the approach of death—that heart it can waft into the sunnier regions of eternal day; and, while the wasted body pines, the brightening spirit, hovering on the outskirts of heaven, tastes a peace that passeth all understanding, a joy unspeakable and full of glory.—*R. B. Nichol.*

[15328] Like precious gems that shine in the dark, the fruits and graces of a Christian life brighten the gloom of "evil days." It is an unfailing source of comfort, in the decline of strength, and under the burden of accumulating sorrows, to lean on God, and to remember deeds done by His grace, that are still bearing good



fruit, and will continue to yield it, when we are gone. The gentleness and patience, which Christian piety has developed in earlier years, become pillars of support when "our earthly house of this tabernacle" begins to dissolve. They preserve the heart from querulousness and discontent, and throw over the conditions of weakness and enforced retirement a soft and beauteous light. We all have seen examples of old age that were lovely, where the hoary head was a crown of glory, and the arm-chair of its repose a throne of power. We have known sick chambers, too, where the atmosphere was like that of a holy shrine. These sufferers from disease and decrepitude were feeble, but no complaining arose from their lips; they were set aside from life's activities, but there was no jealousy clouding the serenity of their faces. Their springs of happiness were too deep to be affected by drought. They were connected with fountains of the skies, and could not fail. For our solace, therefore, in age, and our happiness amid life's growing ills, we do well to heed the injunction to "Fear God and keep His commandments."—*A. W. C.*

[15329] Let it not be imagined that a life godliness must necessarily be a life of melancholy and gloominess; for a man only resigns some pleasures to enjoy others infinitely greater.—*Pascal.*

[15330] God throws many sweet allurements around the man who lives a godly life, and places before him useful things and needful acts in order that he may seek and perform them.—*Bp. Hopkins.*

(8) *Its various counterfeits.*

a. Those having reference to its inward conception.

[15331] The Apostle Paul warns Timothy against "men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness." At first view this seems a strange and almost incredible form of heresy. But call to mind the fact that under the Old Testament dispensation temporal prosperity was promised to godly living, and you will readily see how the idea might arise, as it did, that outward prosperity was always a mark of inward piety. Thus the friends of Job reasoned that his afflictions were a consequence and a proof of sin. Perverse men would both use religion as a means of gain, and would then make their pecuniary success an evidence of their godliness. The heresy is not so strange as it at first appears.—*J. P. Thompson.*

[15332] When St. James wrote his Epistle the tendency to reckon gain as godliness had so far crept into the churches as to call for special rebuke: "If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in cheap clothing; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou

there, or sit thou here under my footstool: do ye not judge with evil thoughts?" The early Christians in their weakness and poverty were in great danger of counting gain as godliness, and of regarding a man with a gold ring and gay apparel as a greater acquisition to their numbers than one meanly dressed, however pious. It is to be feared that this heresy, though strongly condemned by Paul and James, is not entirely rooted out of the churches; that there are still those who measure the worth of Christians by their respectability, and estimate the strength of churches by the bank accounts of their members. This substitution of gain for godliness is one of the most subtle devices of the enemy of souls. It is making a calf of gold under the very brow of Sinai, and setting aside the Holy One of Israel for an image of Mammon.—*Ibid.*

[15333] Worldlings, instead of looking upon godliness as their greatest gain, will look upon gain as their greatest godliness. They love religion, not for the beauty existing in it, but for the dowry annexed to it. They are like the fox, that follows the lion for the prey that is falling from him. If there be no honey in the pot, such wasps will hover no longer about it.—*Secker.*

b. Those having reference to its outward expression.

[15334] There is a poetical form of godliness, a sentiment which takes the air of reverence and breathes the name of divinity, when singing of the grander forms of nature, or the more sublime and terrible of her phenomena. The old Greek and Latin poetry peopled the invisible with gods, whose presence and agency it represented in all the mysteries of nature and in all leading events of human experience. The machinery of Homer's great epic lies within the supernatural; the gods played their part in every Greek tragedy. Indeed we know the religion of Greece and Rome mainly through their literature. Modern poets and novelists who would scorn the epithets, religious or godly, as applied to themselves, yet indulge largely in veneration for unseen powers and the mysteries of being. But while true godliness is due veneration for God, not all veneration is godliness. A phrenological organ of veneration, however largely developed, is not a sure indication of godliness in the heart. To feel melancholy at sight of the falling leaf, to be stirred with admiration at a gorgeous sunset, to feel the majesty of mountains and the sea, and the dim grandeur of the forest—this is not godliness. It may lead the soul to God, or it may not lie deeper than the sentient and the imaginative.—*W. Trail.*

[15335] The Greek mind, which under the fairest clime and the most liberal government was stimulated to the highest culture in taste and art, expressed its devotion through artistic forms, especially in sculpture. Hence Paul

speaks of the carefulness of the Athenians in matters of religion, as exhibited in the number of their objects of devotion. The Gothic mind, trained amid the grandeur of forests and under the law of feudalism, embodied its devout sentiment in the majestic and aspiring yet sombre beauty of its type of architecture. But taste and art, however subsidiary to the expression of devotion, can never be of the essence of godliness. When made an end in themselves, or disproportionately regarded, instead of assisting devotion they displace all true reverence of thought and feeling from the soul.—*Ibid.*

[15336] The form of godliness substitutes a form for heartfelt prayer; an ordinance or ceremony for the fact or truth it was designed to illustrate and convey; a type or symbol for the reality which it should only express to the eye. It is to such an abuse and excess of forms, indeed, that the term formalism is distinctively applied. The Hindoo devotee, the Moslem saint, the monastic of the Papal and Oriental churches, are common illustrations of the form of godliness. But the exhibition is not confined to those who make their ritual conspicuous, and pray by rote or routine. Where no audible form of prayer or of worship is used, there may be a mere pantomime, as empty of spiritual life as are the whirl and jingle of a Japanese prayer-wheel.—*Ibid.*

[15337] Whoever uses his form of worship, be this simple or elaborate, as worship itself, while yet there is no power of true religion in the soul, denies the power of godliness, however zealous for its form.—*Ibid.*

[15338] Where true piety exists, the form of sound words may do much for its conservation, as the apostle writes to Timothy—"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." But if faith and love are wanting, the form of sound words, an orthodox confession, can neither produce them nor supply their place. Wherever the creed is put before the life as evidence of piety, the profession of the lips before the confession of the heart, there the form of godliness is substituted for its power.—*Ibid.*

[15339] The Jews of Paul's time had a zeal of God which was far from true godliness. "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." It is quite possible under our Protestant system to use a routine of religious and charitable activities, as the most superstitious Papist uses a round of ceremonies. The methodical and laborious Southey was once describing to a friend his minute allotment of time for his diversified labours in reading and writing; such an hour been giving to French, the next to Spanish, the next to a review, the next to history, &c. "But pray, Mr. Southey," interrupted the friend, "at what time do you think?" Might it not be

asked of some who abound in the drill-work of religion, "At what time do you pray?"—*Ibid.*

## 2 By acquaintance with God.

### (1) *Nature of this acquaintance.*

*a.* It implies knowledge of God.

[15340] Knowledge is necessary to acquaintanceship. To have friendship with God we must know Him—as far as He is pleased to reveal Himself, and as far as creatures can know Him, in His nature, His attributes and His relations. God is to be known as a Spirit, and as a Unity in Three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To be known as infinite, eternal, and unchanging; as omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent; as holy, just, wise, and good. To be known as our Creator, Preserver, Governor, and through the incarnation, obedience, and death of His Son, our Redeemer. To be known in part from His works, but most from His Word. Only rightly and savingly known through the inward illumination and revelation of His Holy Spirit. To be known as revealed in His Son Jesus Christ (John xiv. 9). Power is given to Christ by the Father to communicate the saving knowledge of Himself to men (Matt. xi. 27; John xvii. 2, 3). The Son's mission is to reveal the Father (John i. 18). Knowledge of God is to be obtained—(1) Through attention to and faith in the Word that reveals Him. The Scriptures testify of Christ; therefore to be searched (John v. 39). (2) Through earnest prayer for Divine illumination and teaching (Prov. ii. 3-5). Wisdom, including the true knowledge of God, given by God Himself in answer to believing prayer (James i. 4). (3) Through application to and acceptance of Christ as a Saviour. One part of His work as a Saviour is to teach, enlighten, and communicate the saving knowledge of God (Matt. ii. 27-29; John xvii. 2, 3). Christ Himself is made wisdom to those who receive and trust in Him (1 Cor. i. 30).—*T. Robinson.*

*b.* It implies submission to God.

[15341] Submission to God is the first duty of a creature. It is necessary to acquaintance and friendly intercourse with God. God's gracious regard is directed to the humble and submissive (Isa. lxvi. 2). Submission is the first lesson in the school of Christ, and the first step to the enjoyment of the Divine favour and friendship (Matt. xi. 27-29).—*Ibid.*

*c.* It implies love to God.

[15342] St. Lewis, the king, having sent Ivo, Bishop of Chartres, on an embassy, the bishop met a woman on the way, sad, fantastic, and melancholy, with fire in one hand, and water in the other. He asked what those symbols meant. She answered, "My purpose is with fire to burn Paradise, and with my water to quench the flames of hell, that men may serve God without the incentives of hope and fear, and purely for the love of God." But this woman began at the wrong end: the love of God is not produced in us after we have contracted evil habits, till God

with His fan in His hand hath thoroughly purged the floor, till He hath cast out all the devils, and swept the house with the instrument of hope and fear, and with the achievements and efficacy of mercies and judgments.—*Bp. Taylor.*

d. It implies conformity to God's will and character.

[15343] Agreement in spirit and principles is necessary to friendship and fellowship (Amos iii. 3). Conformity to God's will and ways is a creature's highest duty and interest. Without it man's spirit is a troubled sea that cannot rest.—*T. Robinson.*

### 3 By delighting in God.

#### (1) *Definition of delighting in God.*

[15344] That which we are to understand ourselves called to under the name of delighting in God, thus taken, is—the keeping of our souls open to Divine influences and communications; thirsting after them, praying and waiting for them; endeavouring to improve them and co-operate with them, and to stir up ourselves unto such exercises of religion as they lead to, and are most suitable to our present state; together with an allowing, yea, and applying ourselves to stay and taste, in our progress and course, the sweetness and delightfulness of those communications and operations whereof we have any present experience.—*J. Howe.*

#### (2) *The connection between desire and delight.*

[15345] Desire and delight are but two acts of love, diversified only by the distance or presence of the same object; which, when it is distant, the soul, acted and prompted by love, desires, moves towards it, pursues it; when present and attained, delights in it, enjoys it, stays upon it, satisfies itself in it, according to the measure of goodness it finds there.—*Ibid.*

[15346] The delight and rest which follows desire, in the actual fruition of a full and satisfying good, is much more intense and pure than that which either goes before or doth accompany it, and is indeed the same thing with fruition or enjoyment itself.—*Ibid.*

#### (3) *The ways in which we may prove delight in God.*

[15347] (1) By holding fellowship with Him. We cultivate the society of those we delight in. Hence true religion is a "walking with God" (Micah vi. 8; Gen. v. 22, vi. 9). (2) By obeying His will and seeking to please Him. It is impossible willingly to disobey or grieve the person we delight in. To "walk with God," and to "please God," are spoken of in Scripture as one and the same thing (Gen. v. 22, 54, compared with Heb. xi. 5). (3) By ceasing to love and delight in the world. It is impossible to love and please two masters of opposite characters. The love of the world is incompatible with the love of God (Matt. vi. 24; 1 John ii. 14, 15). The world is a crucified thing where Christ is delighted in (Gal. vi. 14). (4) By attending upon His ordinances. His ordinances

are the means of fellowship with God, and helps to the enjoyment of Him. His banqueting-house, where His banner over us is love (Cant. ii. 4). The sanctuary and the Sabbath are a delight when God Himself is so (Psa. xxvi. 8, lxiii. 1, 2, lxxx. 1, 10; Isa. lviii. 13). (5) By cheerfully acquiescing in His appointments. Delight in a person leads to delight, and at least to a cheerful acquiescence, in what he says and does. This is strictly true in regard to God, all whose sayings and doings are known and believed to be right.—*T. Robinson.*

[15348] As if the inquiry were, What it is that I desire really to enjoy when I desire to enjoy a friend? (namely, as the notion of a friend or friendship doth most properly import). That is, neither to desire the impossible thing, of possessing his being as my own; nor the unsatisfying thing, the mere partaking some part of his external goods and wealth, whereof it may be he daily imparts somewhat to every beggar at his door: but it is to have his intimate acquaintance, his counsel and advice, the advantage of improving myself by his converse, and of conforming myself to his example in his imitable perfections, the assurances of his faithful, constant love and friendship, in reference to all future emergencies. A friend is really to be enjoyed in such things as these. And in such-like is God to be enjoyed also. But with this difference, that God's communications are more immediate, more constant, more powerful and efficacious, more delightful infinitely, and satisfying, in respect both of the good communicated, and the way of communication.—*J. Howe.*

[15349] Nothing can delight us, or be enjoyed by us, whereof we do not, some way, or by some faculty or other, partake somewhat; either by our external sense, sensitive appetite, fancy, memory, mind, will; and either in a higher or lower degree, for a longer or a shorter time; according as the delight is, for kind, degree, or continuance, which is taken therein. This is plain in itself. And in the present case, therefore, of delighting in God or enjoying Him, some communication or participation there must be, one way or other, according as the enjoyment of Him is.—*Ibid.*

#### (4) *Necessity of resolutely giving the mind to this delight.*

[15350] It is necessary that you do deliberately and resolutely design the thing itself. Propose to yourselves delighting in God as a business unto which you will, designedly and with steadfast purpose, apply your whole soul. Content not yourselves with light, roving thoughts about it, which many have about divers matters which they never think fit to engage themselves in. Determine the matter fully in your own heart, and say, "Many projects I have tried in my time, sundry things I have turned my mind unto, to little purpose; I will now see what there is of delight to be found in God." The sloth and aversion of a backward heart must be



overcome by resolution; and that resolution be well weighed, deliberately taken up, deeply fixed, that it may last and overcome.—*Ibid.*

(5) *Reason why the Christian's joy is preferable to any other.*

[15351] The incomprehensibly great and glorious Being is the object of the Christian's joy; and must not that joy which terminates on such an object be preferable to any other? must not the joy vary with the object; be mean and low, or high and excellent as that is? and consequently where the object is of infinite worth, must not the joy have a value which is proportionable?—*H. Grove.*

(6) *Considerations and grounds which lead us to delight in God.*

[15352] (1) The excellence and loveliness in God. God is worthy to be delighted in—*a.* In Himself and His perfections; *b.* In what He has become to us in and through Jesus Christ. (2) The inwardness and spirituality of true religion. True religion is a thing of the heart; the seat of delight. Not a thing of form or ceremony; or of bodily service; or of mere morality or outward obedience. A thing of delight, because a thing of love. (3) The happiness and pleasantness of true piety. Not only causes delight, but is itself a delighting. Wisdom's ways are pleasantness and peace. Delight and pleasure are a necessary accompaniment of true religion. God is the object of true religion, not as a Being merely to be feared or served, but delighted in. God is sufficient in Himself to fill every intelligent creature with joy. His favour is life; His loving-kindness is better than life. Believers though not seeing Christ, yet believing and so loving Him, rejoice in Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Peter i. 8).—*T. Robinson.*

(7) *The advantages and blessings therefrom resulting.*

*a.* It is a remedy against evil and vain thoughts.

[15353] Those great and glorious things which the gospel reveals have been the subject of the believer's serious and close meditations; he in a manner gave himself to these things, not a day passed without these devout entertainments; his appetite to them returned as to his necessary food; his soul would often take wing, leave the world and the body, soar aloft in heavenly contemplations, dwell upon the perfections of God, the love of Jesus, the happiness of the saints under the protection of their heavenly Father, and especially in His immediate presence. Besides his stated seasons for such thoughts, they would mingle with his other thoughts, and at once regulate and refine them: his thoughts of holy and heavenly objects were an excellent preservative from evil and vain thoughts, and he could much more easily govern the motions of his mind, when he was used to exercise it in this Christian manner.—*H. Grove.*

*b.* It necessarily loosens our attachment to the world and the things of the world.

[15354] The astronomer saith, If it were possible for a man to be lifted up as high as the moon, the earth would seem to him but as a little point. If we could be lifted to heaven in our affections, all earthly delights would seem as nothing; when the woman of Samaria had met with Christ, down goes the pitcher, she leaves that behind; he who delights in God, as having tasted the sweetness in Him, doth not much mind the pitcher, he leaves the world behind.—*T. Watson.*

(8) *Question raised: How far pleasure in the world is compatible with this attitude of the soul?*

[15355] How may a Christian take pleasure in the world? By having respect to three things—whether it be lawful, expedient, or becoming. The pleasure must be lawful: there can be no safety in a sinful delight; that which is absolutely evil can by no circumstance be made good. Pleasure, therefore, first must have the warrant, that it be without sin; then the measure, that it be without excess. If the cup be evil, we may not taste it; though good, yet not carouse it. Reason forbids us both to touch known poison, and to be drunk with wholesome wine. Pleasure is like sauce to our meal: we must not be too saucy. Nor is the lawfulness only observable, but the convenience: a man may wear good clothes unhand somely; the stuff may be good, yet, while the fashion of the garment does not become him, it appears ridiculous. Let us be sure that our delight excludes not the presence of God: we may please ourselves so long as we do not displease Him. Let us use pleasure in God, from God, to God: in God, lawfully; from God, thankfully; to God, that is, to His glory.—*T. Adams.*

#### 4 By inquiring of God.

(1) *Naturalness and propriety of this inquiry.*

[15356] If a man be sensible of his wants, you need not supply him with words. If a poor tenant come to a landlord, and find he has a hard bargain, let him alone for telling his tale. I warrant you he will open the state of his wife and children, and the ill year he has had; he will be eloquent enough. Take any man that is sensible of his wants, and you shall not need to dictate words to him. There is no man that has a humble and broken heart, though he be ever so illiterate, but he will have a large heart to God in this kind.—*R. Sibbes, D.D.*

(2) *Reason for the need of this inquiry.*

*a.* Because it elicits our love and trust.

[15357] Should you like to have a child who never spoke to you, never asked you for anything? Of course not. And why? "Because," you would say, "one might as well have a dumb animal in one's family instead of a child, if it is never to talk and ask questions and advice." Most true and reasonable; and as you would say of your children, so says God of His. You

feel that, unless you teach your children to ask you for all they want—even though you know their necessities before they ask—you will never call out their love and trust toward you.—*Charles Kingsley.*

## 5 By fearing God.

### (1) *Nature of this fear.*

a. It is a reverential awe of the power of the Most High combined with a child-like confidence.

[15358] Among the children of God there is always that fearful and bowed apprehension of His majesty, and that sacred dread of all offence of Him which is called the fear of God; yet of real and essential fear there is not any, but clinging of confidence to Him as their rock, fortress, and deliverer; and perfect love and casting out of fear. . . . And the more dreadful seems the height of His majesty, the less fear they feel that dwell in the shadow of it.—*Ruskin.*

b. It is a just sense of the Almighty's majesty and goodness.

[15359] "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Of what sort, then, is the fear of the Lord? Is it an abject slavish fear? No, certainly; all expositors agree to warn you against this sense and interpretation of fear. But were you to ask the reason why the fear of God is not a slavish fear, there is only this reason to be given you, because God is no tyrant; and I suppose every man of sense will admit this for a good reason: and what else is this but adjusting the sense of fear from the true notion and conception of God? The properties of religious fear, which are mentioned in Scripture, are various: "The fear of the Lord is clean," says the Psalmist: "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil," says Solomon; and again, "It is a fountain of life;" and again, "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence." Try all these in the same way, and you will find they are deducible only from the notion and conception of God, and are not to be understood without it. The fear of God therefore is not to be expounded from the nature of fear, considered as a distinct passion of the mind; but by considering the natural effect that a just sense and notion of God has on the mind of a rational creature: for the fear of God signifies that frame and affection of soul which is the consequence of a just notion and conception of the Deity. It is called the fear of God, because as majesty and power are the principal parts of the idea of God, so fear and reverence are the main ingredients in the affection that arises from it; not but that love and honour and admiration are included in the notion.—*Bp. Sherlock.*

c. It is a holy concern to avoid anything displeasing to God.

[15360] The most proper and pregnant proof of the fear of God is the fear of offending God; in which regard it is perfectly filial. The good child is afraid of displeasing his father though he were sure not to be beaten, whereas the slave

is only afraid of stripes, not of displeasure. Out of this dear awe to his Father in heaven the truly regenerate trembles to be but tempted, and yet resolves not to yield to any assault; whether proffers of favour or violence of battery, all is one. The attached soul will hold out, and scorns so much as to look of what colour the flag is, as having learned to be no less afraid of sin than of hell, and if the option were given him whether he would rather sin without punishment or be punished without sin, the choice would not be difficult; any torment were more easy than the conscience filled with a sense of the Divine displeasure. It was good Joseph's just question, "How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" So it is the sin he sticks at, not the judgment; as one that would have feared the offence if there had been no hell.—*Bp. Hall.*

d. It is an anxious care and solicitude lest we should lose the favour of God.

[15361] The reason why we ought to fear, is, because "God worketh in us both to will and to do:" let us examine, then, how far this argument goes, and that will show us the nature of that fear which is the consequence of it. To will and to do good are the terms and conditions of our salvation; and therefore from whence we have the power to will and to do, from thence we have the means of salvation. Now salvation comprehends in it all the good we are capable of enjoying, without which our life is death, and our hope misery: so that if we depend on God to work in us both to will and to do, we depend on Him for all that is or can be valuable to man. And further, "God worketh in us of His own good pleasure:" we have no right or claim to His assistance; freely He gave, and freely He may take away whenever He pleases. Now consider yourself in this state of dependence, and see what it is you have to fear. All your danger is in losing the favour of God; and therefore for that too must be all your fear. Now this fear has more of care and solicitude in it than of terror or amazement: for it is one thing to be afraid of a man, lest he should hurt you, and another thing to be afraid of losing his favour: the first fear is terror, the last is carefulness.—*Bp. Sherlock.*

### (2) *Its blessedness and influence.*

a. It restrains from acts of sin.

[15362] As the banks keep out the water, so the fear of the Lord keeps out uncleanness. Such as want the fear of God want the bridle that should check them from sin. How did Joseph keep from his mistress's temptation? The fear of God pulled him back. Gen. xxxix. 9: "How should I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" St. Bernard calls holy fear *janitor animæ*, the door-keeper of the soul. As a nobleman's porter stands at the door, and keeps out vagrants, so the fear of God stands and keeps out all sinful temptations from entering.—*T. Watson.*

[15363] God planted fear in the soul as truly

as He planted hope or courage. Fear is a kind of bell, or gong, which rings the mind into quick life and avoidance upon the approach of danger.—*H. W. Beecher.*

δ. It tends to the healing of the soul, and prepares the way for love.

[15364] Fear doth goad the conscience, but be thou not afraid, love enters in, and she heals the wound which fear inflicts. The fear of God so wounds, as doth the leech's knife or lancet, it takes away the rottenness, and seems to make the wound greater. Behold, when the rottenness was in the body, the wound was less, but perilous; now comes the knife; the wound smarted less than it smarteth now while the leech is cutting it. It smarts more while he is operating upon it than it would if it were not operated upon; it smarts more under the healing operation, but only that it may never smart when the healing is effected. Then let fear occupy thine heart, that it may bring in love; let the cicatrice succeed to the leech's knife. He is such an healer, that the cicatrices do not even appear; only do thou put thyself under His hand. Fear must enter in, that by it love may come. Fear is the healing operation; love is health. But he that feareth is not made perfect in love, because fear hath torment.—*Augustine.*

ε. It destroys the fear of man.

[15365] We are very apt to be awed by men, and to start from our duty for fear of temporal evils and sufferings. This fear seized upon St. Peter, and made him deny his Master. And where the fear of men does not prevail so far, yet it will many times make men shy and timorous in the owning of religion in the times of danger. This made Nicodemus to come to our Saviour by night (John iii. 2). So likewise many of the rulers who believed in Christ durst not make open confession of Him, lest they should have been put out of the synagogue (John xii. 42). Some men that have good inclinations to the truth, and are inwardly convinced of it, yet in times of danger they love to be wise and cautious, they have an eye to a retreat, and are loth to venture too far. But if we give way to these fears, and suffer them to possess us, we shall be exposed to many temptations, and be liable to be seduced from our duty. So Solomon observes (Prov. xxix. 25), "The fear of man bringeth a snare." Now if we would cast out this fear of men, it must be by a greater fear, which is stronger and more powerful; and that is the fear of God (Isa. viii. 12, 13). "Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid;" speaking of the fear of men, against which he prescribes this remedy, "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts Himself, and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread." If God be once the object of our fear, and we be thoroughly possessed with awful apprehensions of Him, the frowns of men, and the wrath and displeasure of the greatest upon earth, will signify nothing to us. This preserved Moses amidst all the temptations of a court (Heb. xi. 27). "He feared not the wrath of the king: for he

endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." He could easily bear the anger of Pharaoh when by faith he beheld the omnipotent justice of the King immortal and invisible.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

(3) *Its relation to hope, knowledge, and courage.*  
a. As a factor in a compensating balance.

[15366] Hope and fear are often joined. Fear keeps hope from being too sanguine, as hope keeps fear from fainting. Knowledge without fear would be presumption; fear without knowledge breeds superstition. Fear and love work in happy harmony. Fear is naturally the restraining power, love the constraining. Courage without fear would often be headstrong and rash. Fear without courage would be timid and faint-hearted. Fear and assurance are sweetly coupled; "I know I shall fall," says fear, "unless thou hold me up." "I know I shall not fall," is the answer, "for the Lord has promised to make me stand."—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

(4) *Its perverted aspect.*

[15367] Fear hath kept many a child of God from doing his duty, from making a bold profession. Fear has brought bondage into his spirit. Fear misused, thou art the Christian's greatest curse, and thou art the sinner's ruin. Thou art a sly serpent, creeping amongst the thorns of sin, and when thou art allowed to twist thyself around manhood, thou dost crush it in thy folds, and poison it with thy venom. Nothing can be worse than this sinful fear; it hath slaughtered its myriads and sent thousands to hell. But it yet may seem a paradox; fear, when rightly employed, is the very brightest state of Christianity, and is used to express all piety, comprehended in one emotion. "The fear of God" is the constant description which the Scripture gives of true religion.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

[15368] Many worthy people go through their religious duties in a thoroughly cowed spirit. They want just to escape God's wrath—not to gain His kind favour. The great spring of conduct within them is not love, but abject terror. Truly a mistaken service! Let there be deep humility, but nothing of that unworthy terror. You remember what we know on the best of all authority is the first and great thing we are to do. It is not to cultivate a cowed spirit. It is to *love* our Maker with heart and soul and mind.—*A. K. H. Boyd.*

[15369] It is written of the colonists whom Shalmaneser planted in Samaria, that they "feared the Lord and served their own gods" (2 Kings xvii. 33). To the former they offered the service of fear; to the latter the service of love. It is easy to divine what kind of fear this was, and which was the more hearty service.—*M. J.*

6 By acknowledging God in all things.

*The various ways in which God is acknowledged.*

[15370] When we (1) take Him into our



counsels before we form our plans ; (2) ask His blessing in their progress ; (3) surrender or change them whenever He requires it ; and (4) when we honour Him as our Father, and obey Him as our King.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

## 7 By standing fast in the faith.

### *Its necessity and advantages.*

[15371] There are some men who, because they want to grow, are continually being transplanted ; and they think that because they keep moving from place to place, they are gaining ; but they gain nothing at all. Trees that grow fastest stand stillest. Running after every new thing that presents itself does not increase the growth of Christian graces, or anything else that is good. If a man would grow spiritually, he must have a standpoint, a fixed root-place, for his religious convictions.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[15372] In religion, as in all other things too, any one may see that this cometh to pass (*i.e.*, the advantages accruing to steadfastness). For so a plant but lately set in the ground is easily pulled up ; but no longer so when rooted for a long time ; it then requires great strength in the lever. And a building newly put together is easily thrown down by those who push against it ; but once well fixed, it gives great trouble to those who attempt to pull it down. And a wild beast that hath made his accustomed haunt in certain places for a long time is with difficulty driven away.—*Chrysostom.*

## TRUST IN GOD.

### I. NATURE OF TRUST OR CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

[15373] Confidence signifies firm belief or trust, assurance, reliance ; and spiritual confidence means the firm belief, the large assurance of the soul. It is the soul looking to some object to which it clings, or in whom it fully trusts, on whom it relies with an unshaken assurance.—*H. F. Walker.*

[15374] To trust God, as seen in the face of His Son, and to believe that He loves us, *that* is faith, *that* is what we must do to be saved. And to love God, as seen in the face of His Son, and to seek to testify our love by our whole life—that is Christian duty ; *that* is all we have to do.—*A. K. H. Boyd.*

### II. ITS OBJECTS.

[15375] A man that trusts, expects. The Lord does not give us all at present that He means us to enjoy. We trust God for deliverance. Paul trusted for time to come, from what he had formerly experienced. Consider what God has done for us before. God and we are the same now as we have been. The Lord was under no more obligation to help us then than He is now. He has delivered, does deliver, and will deliver.

We trust God for the fulfilment of His promises. These are very extensive, exceedingly great and precious ; and when any promise is made to us, we have a right to plead it. Our confidence should be equal to the veracity of the promiser ; and with respect to God's promises they are backed with all His perfections. Our trust cannot be equal to the veracity of God ; for we are only finite and He is infinite ; but this confidence in God should be as high as men can reach.—*Cockin.*

### III. ITS EXTENT AS WELL AS NECESSARY LIMITS.

[15376] Suppose a parent were to commit his child to the care of the captain of a vessel, bound to America ; the captain here has a charge : the parent has trusted him with his child. It is thus that we trust the Lord. The Christian trusts God with all his concerns : family, trade, affairs in general, concerns in life. A man should form his plans according to the best of his judgment and leave the rest with God. He that forms no plan, but only trusts God, is a fool ; for God always blesses us through the means and measures we adopt. On the other hand, he who lays his plans and does not trust God is an infidel. Exertion on our part and trust in God are to be connected. The Christian commits his soul to God. Paul knew whom he believed, &c.—*Ibid.*

[15377] The well-grounded trust of the true believer must be—(1) Bounded by the clear direction and warrant of God's word, not by our own wish or fancy. Christ is to be trusted not otherwise than as He has bound Himself. We must beware of presumption in expecting too much, as well as of unbelief in expecting too little. (2) The privilege of a clear conscience. Allowed and unmortified sin is a barrier to every Christian privilege (1 Peter iv. 19). Mark "well-doing" as the condition of the committing our souls to God. We must not ask meat for our lust (1 John iii. 21). (3) Exercised in the path of the precept (Psa. cxix. 173), and in the way of holiness (Psa. xxxvii. 3). (4) Whilst we make use of all proper means.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

### IV. ITS SPECIAL SEASONS

#### 1 The time of darkness.

[15378] The heavens may grow black, and everything around us appear gloomy. At this season we must trust in the name of the Lord. Paul on his voyage was persuaded that none should be lost : he believed that God would bring the vessel safely into port.—*Cockin.*

#### 2 The time of temporal need.

[15379] "Bread shall be given and water sure ;" a man is not commanded to be content when he wants bread : "having food and raiment, therewith be content." If we trust God for spiritual

things, we ought to trust Him for temporal things; for the higher act of the mind always includes the lower. When our fears are great—that we shall not proceed in the Divine life; that we shall be overcome or turn aside; that our enemies will be too powerful—at these seasons we can turn to none but God.—*Ibid.*

### 3 The hour of death.

[15380] Trust with a child-like dependence upon God, and you shall fear no evil, for be assured that even “if the enemy comes in like a flood,” the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. While at that dread hour, when the world cannot help you, when all the powers of nature are in vain, yea, when your heart and your flesh shall fail you, you will be enabled still to rely with peace upon Him who has said, “I will be the strength of thy heart and thy portion for ever.”—*H. Blunt.*

## V. ITS EXCELLENCE.

[15381] He that puts his confidence in God only, is neither overjoyed in any great good things of this life, nor sorrowful for a little thing.—*Ep. Taylor.*

## VI. ITS MANIFESTATIONS.

### I In simple reliance upon God.

(1) *The entire dependence of all things upon God.*

[15382] No creature hath a self-sufficiency to maintain and support itself. Things of art may subsist without the artificer, as a carpenter maketh a house, and then leaveth it to stand of itself, the shipwright maketh a ship, and then leaveth it to the pilot to guide it; but all things of nature depend upon God that made them, because they have their whole being from Him, matter, and form, which He continueth no longer than He pleaseth, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven, visible or invisible. No impression of the agent remaineth in the effect when His action ceaseth; when the effect wholly dependeth on the cause, as when the air is enlightened which receiveth light from the sun, but when the sun is gone the light ceases: so when God withdraws the creature vanishes, for they have no other being than God is pleased to bestow upon them.—*T. Manton.*

(2) *The benefit of realizing this dependence.*

[15383] There is a point at which we must give up and stand still, and say, “We can do no more.” That is a matter of certainty in your common daily life; and out of it will come such reflections as these: I have nothing that has not upon it God’s signature and God’s superscription. I can work; but my work may come to nothing. I may sow my seed, but if He withhold the baptism of the dew and the rain, and the benediction of the sunlight, all my labour will come to nothingness, to mortification and pain! This must have some meaning.

There must, in such a combination of circumstances as these, be a purpose which I ought to know, and understand, and work by. If a man once be started on that course of reflection, the probability is, that he who begins as a reverent inquirer, will end as a devout worshipper.—*J. Parker, D.D.*

(3) *Special motives in the case of the Christian for hopeful reliance.*

[15384] If you are in any real sense Christ’s angel or messenger,—if you recognize that as the Father sent Him, so has He sent you into the world to do His work,—if there be any department of Christian exertion, life, or enterprise, with which you have, in a manner, become bound up,—be not afraid either of opposition, or, of what is much more alarming, of your own strength failing; for in so far as you have thus given yourself to His work, in so far will you be kept by His strength,—upheld and guided, and encouraged also by the unfailing grasp of that hand out of which none can pluck you.—*Dods.*

(4) *Special seasons in life peculiarly fit for waiting in simple dependence upon God instead of working.*

[15385] There are seasons for working, and seasons for waiting, and seasons when we should both work and wait. And the waiting is often the harder task. The command “stand still” signifies fear not, hold your position, be calm, don’t run, wait, and “see the salvation of God,” and calls for more courage than an order to “go forward.” We often come to such a crisis. Our resources are exhausted, our burdens crush us, obstacles are overwhelming; every way is hedged, no human power can bring deliverance. Shall we give up? Is failure inevitable? We may wait upon the Lord. “Those who wait upon Him shall not be ashamed.” “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” The more our hearts reach out after Divine help, the surer we are to receive it. The greatest scientists confess that Divine regard for human want, desire, and prayer, is reasonable. The Christian knows that it is real. Men change the direction of events to meet the wants of those who ask. Why should not God?—*Anon.*

### 2 In casting our burdens upon the Lord.

(1) *The wisdom and necessity of this course.*

As the only means by which we may hope for effectual relief.

[15386] There are other expedients, indeed, to which men resort. Some seek by travel, with its constant change of scene, to divert the mind from its troubles; some rush into business, or plunge into incessant rounds of pleasure and dissipation, to drown their cares and sorrows. Temporary forgetfulness, but no real and abiding relief, can be found in any such resources. The result of such experiments is most truthfully given by the prophet Isaiah, who says, “It is as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty:

or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite."—*Richard Newton*.

[15387] Care cannot be "rolled off" on to the ground, or "given to the winds," or "cast" into the sea, or drowned in a cup. There is only one disposal, aside from bearing it one's self, which a sane mind can make of a care. It may be given to a living person, your friend or God. For a care is something that needs sentient attention of mind, either your own or another's.—*Anon.*

(2) *The manner in which our burdens may be cast on the Lord.*

[15388] (1) By telling God all about them. (2) By asking His help to bear them. (3) By submitting to His will in reference to them.—*Richard Newton*.

(3) *The wisdom of promptitude in this matter.*

[15389] Cast your troubles where you have cast your sins; you have cast your sins into the depth of the sea, there cast your troubles also. Never keep a trouble half an hour on your own mind before you tell it to your heavenly Father. As soon as the trouble comes, quick, the first thing, tell it to Him. Remember that the longer you delay your telling your trouble to God, the more your peace will be impaired. The longer the frost lasts, the more likely that the ponds will be frozen.—*C. H. Spurgeon*.

## VII. ITS TRIUMPHS.

[15390] When is trust at the highest triumph? When we trust God—(1) Despite appearances; like Jacob, when he went forth to meet Esau (Gen. xxxii.); like David, when he went to meet Goliath (1 Sam. xvii. 32–50); and afterwards (Psa. iii. 6, xxvii. 2, 3); like Elijah, when confronting the priests of Baal (1 Kings xviii. 22, 30–38); like Job (xiii. 15). (2) When all before us seems shrouded in mystery and dread. Darkness always breeds terror. A little noise in the night alarms far more than one much louder in the day. (3) When we are left alone, and all human help is withdrawn (Psa. xxii. 11, xxvii. 10, xxxviii. 11). (4) When our plans fail at the beginning, and we are still enabled to persevere.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

## VIII. THE UNBELIEF OF DISTRUST.

[15391] Those are naturally timorous and self-distrustful persons who do not see that they are distrusting God rather than themselves. They seem to themselves to have been truly renewed in the love of God, but they have some doubts, and they make it appear to be wiser that they should not, just now, testify their supposed new experience. It is better, they think, to wait till they have had a long, secret trial of themselves, and learned whether they

can endure,—better, that is, to see whether they can keep alive the grace under suppression; when it must be infallibly stifled and cannot live, except in the open field of duty and love and holy fellowship. They are not simple; they are unnatural; what is in them, in their feeling, their secret hope, their joy begun, they regulate and suppress. If they were placed in heaven itself, they would not sing the first month, pretending that they had not tried their voices, or perchance doubting whether it is quite modest in them to thank God for His mercy, till they are more sure whether it is really to be sufficient in them. There is a great deal of unbelief in their backwardness; a great deal of self-consciousness in their modesty; and sometimes a little will is cunningly mixed with both. Sometimes they wait to be exhorted and made much of by the sympathy of others. Sometimes the very wicked thought is cunningly let in, behind their seeming delicacy, that God should do more for them, and give them an experience with greater circumstance.—*H. Bushnell, D.D.*

## IX. THE ADVANTAGES OF CONFIDENCE.

[15392] It is that strong, buoyant confidence in God and in His love which gives energy and spirit to do right without doubt or despondence.—*Charles Kingsley*.

[15393] When a man shall look on God as one who may hate him for anything he knows, who may be an enemy to him one day, he can never love him heartily. When a man hath no ground to set his foot on, he will do it tenderly and warily; but when he looks upon God as one whom he may trust, whose love he is sure of, that he builds on that as a rock, this is that which makes his heart perfect to him, when he can say, as Paul, "I know whom I have trusted."—*Anon.*

[15394] Trust to that which aye remains, the blisse of heaven above,  
Which time, nor fate, nor worde, nor storme are able to remove;  
Trust to that sure celestial Rocke that rests on glorious throne,  
That hath beene, is, and must be still our anchor-hold alone.—*Kinwelmershe*.

## ZEAL FOR THE HONOUR OF GOD.

### I. CONTRAST BETWEEN TRUE AND FALSE ZEAL FOR GOD'S HONOUR.

[15395] True zeal is a loving thing, and makes us always active to edification, and not to destruction. If we keep the fire of zeal within the chimney, in its own proper place, it never doth any hurt; it only warmeth, quickeneth, and enliveneth us; but if once we let it break out, and catch hold of the thatch of our flesh, and kindle



our corrupt nature, and set the house of our body on fire, it is no longer zeal, it is no heavenly fire, it is a most destructive and devouring thing.  
—*K. Cudworth.*

[15396] True zeal is an *ignis lambens*, a soft and gentle flame, that will not scorch one's hand ; it is no predatory or voracious thing ; but carnal and fleshly zeal is like the spirit of gunpowder set on fire, that tears and blows up all that stands before it. True zeal is like the vital heat in us, that we live upon, which we never feel to be angry or troublesome ; but though it gently feed upon the radical oil within us, that sweet balsam of our natural moisture, yet it lives lovingly with it, and maintains that by which it is fed : but that other furious and distempered zeal is nothing else but a fever in the soul. In short, we may learn what kind of zeal it is that we should make use of in promoting the gospel, by an emblem of God's own given us in the Scripture, those fiery tongues that upon the day of Pentecost sat upon the apostles ; which sure were harmless flames, for we cannot read that they did any hurt, or that they did so much as singe a hair of their heads.—*Ibid.*

## II. MARKS BY WHICH FALSE ZEAL MAY BE DISTINGUISHED.

- 1 When it is accompanied by the seeking or desire for knowledge ; rather than aversion to it—dread of it—deprecation of it.

[15397] There *is* such religious zeal. No disposition to think and inquire. Horror of free reasoning. A notion that all religious speculation is necessarily destructive to religious feeling ; that all knowledge analogous to Christian principles is but a feigned and treacherous ally. Inasmuch, that the very reasons for being zealous are not to be so examined as to be clearly defined in the understanding—not so tried as to be verified—not reduced to so positive a form that they can be distinctly assigned. So that the quality and excellence of the general or the particular object of the zeal cannot be so stated as to show how justly the zeal is applied. The active feeling is to be regarded as a kind of infallible impulse, so certainly under the direction of the Divine intellect, that there is no need that the man should exert and improve his own. But how is he so certain that his feelings are in such perfect acquiescent harmony with God ? to be sure of that would require knowledge of no light attainment, truly ! Whatever the strong impulse may be, it plainly is not “zeal according to knowledge,” when a man does not clearly understand why he is zealous.—*John Foster.*

- 2 When it is a capricious and fluctuating zeal.

[15398] It shall glow and blaze at one time, and seem sunk under the ashes at another ; varying with the changeable mood of the man's mind. But how does this accord to knowledge ? What a man really knows at one time, he does

not know, or know the contrary of, at another. It is true that there will be, in most minds, very considerable variations of feeling, of which the religious affection, zeal, will in a measure partake. But a most important counteracting and sustaining principle here is a clear, decided knowledge of the object and reasons of the zeal. Without this, when the animated feeling intermits, all seems to be gone and vanished. As if, in regard to objects in the material world, a man were interested only by certain beautiful appearances dependent on sunshine, and made no account of their permanent substance and form. But knowledge keeps in clear, constant manifestation the absolute value of the objects of zeal. And this will conduce to a speedier revival of the feeling, after its temporary intermission or repression ; and will, in the interval, preserve the object from seeming to fade and melt into nothing.—*Ibid.*

- 3 When it consists, in a considerable degree, of mere temper.

[15399] A false zeal is when it is not a warm feeling toward the object, just for its own sake, and in proportion to its own claims ; but where a man's irritability, or anger, or impetuosity and restlessness for action, in some way on his own account, goes into the zeal for the object ; and is mistaken by him, as all pure zeal respecting the object itself. So that, in this one point especially, it is not “according to knowledge ;” for he knows not himself. “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” If this portion could be struck out of the zeal, there would be far less of it ; and the object itself would less seem to deserve it. But then, he did not before rightly know—justly estimate—the merits of the object.—*Ibid.*

- 4 When, in promoting any religious object, it is less concerned about the object itself, as to be promoted, than about the man himself, as promoting it.

[15400] Jehu's zeal—it was, in mere point of fact, for the cause of the “Lord of hosts ;” while, from other circumstances, it would appear that he did not really care much for that sacred cause itself ; but it was a fine thing that *he* should be exhibited, as a conspicuous and important promoter and vindicator, prominent in the ranks of the Lord's “hosts.”—*Ibid.*

- 5 When it is for comparatively little things in religion.

[15401] It is easy to say that nothing in religion can be considered as, in an absolute sense, of little importance. And we may allow that if a man were capable of zeal up to some stupendous pitch, so that, with regard to the greatest things of religion, it should emulate, and rival, and mingle its flames with the zeal of angelic spirits—he might then constantly feel what would still be great zeal down at the lowest points of the gradation. This would be but in proportion. But let him think what is the whole amount, at the best, of his zeal ; and then,

of the superlative importance of some things in religion; and if so much is expended on the minor things, what will there be for the greater? Now knowledge gives the scale of the greater and the less. Let him see whether his zeal is "according" to that scale. There are minor points of doctrine, and various matters of form, observance, external institution. These have often been magnified and enforced as if they were the very life and essence of Christianity.—*Ibid.*

**6 When it is for great things for little reasons.**

[15402] Thus, of Christianity in its whole substance, there have been zealous advocates, just on this ground, that it is conducive to the temporal well-being of a state! By innumerable persons some one model of Christian faith is zealously maintained, chiefly because it has been maintained by their ancestors! In individual instances we have known persons zealously holding some important doctrine, chiefly because it has happened to coincide with some particular fancy or impression of the person's mind; not from a consideration of its own great evidences. This is a gross desertion of the rule—"that zeal should be "according to knowledge."—*Ibid.*

**7 When it is for single, exclusive points in religion—whether of greater or less importance—especially the most controverted ones; as if the whole importance of religion converged to those points, and were to be found there alone. (Example: the most strenuous Calvinists and Arminians.)**

[15403] Such zeal miserably impoverishes the interest for religion as a grand comprehensive whole, and for all the parts of it but the one. And thus the very "knowledge" itself will dwindle from taking account of the whole.—*Ibid.*

**8 When it is pertinaciously expended in some one way of attempting to serve religion, when it might be applied to better purpose.**

[15404] Thus, able men have exhausted their talents and labours upon some comparatively trifling things relating to religion, when, with the same exertion, they might have served it in its greatest interests. And Christians of inferior order have been seen invincibly set on serving the cause of God, in ways foreign to their attainments and situations, when there were plainly before them other ways of certain usefulness.—*Ibid.*

**9 When, in attempting to do good, it takes no account of the fitness of season and occasion.**

[15405] It is quite enough that the thing and the intention be good in themselves—never mind *when, how, or where*. There is no attention to the particular circumstance of the situation;

no consideration of the things likely, in a particular instance, to fall in to pervert and frustrate; no selection of opportunity; no judicious policy respecting men's prejudices, or the circumstances that influence them. Of what value is knowledge, as thus illustrated by the want of it! Knowledge would show the adaptation of means to ends—the laws and working of human minds—the favourable conjuncture. Knowledge would point to consequences. And zeal should not fancy itself the more noble and heroic for setting all consequences at defiance.—*Ibid.*

**10 When it seems willing to let its activity in public plans and exertions to serve religion, be a substitute for personal religion.**

[15406] It is pleasing to believe "better things" of the majority of such active persons, but the exceptions are too many and obvious. In such zeal, where is the man's knowledge, if it does not strike him, glare upon him, with irresistible conviction, how indispensable is religion to his own self?—*Ibid.*

**III. MISAPPLICATIONS AND MISUSE OF THE PHRASE "ZEAL WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE."**

[15407] To an ill-disposed mind it is exceedingly gratifying to find Scripture that can be quoted with a specious appearance of sanction. This sentence (Rom. x. 2) is an example; for it has very often been cited for the purpose of depreciating zeal itself, of the genuine kind, and in its best applications. Think on how many excellent projects, and efforts, and men, this has been pronounced—"zeal without knowledge." How many excellent and eventually successful designs would have been abandoned if this had always been listened to as a right application of the text. What would have become, for instance, of most of the missionary projects which are now in hopeful, or eminently successful, operation? of many designs for enlightening, reforming, Christianizing, dark parts of our nation? of many venturesome experiments for good hazarded upon the strength of one circumstance in favour, while there appeared many against? of any project of hostility to a prevailing evil, boldly conceived and undertaken? In every such instance the cry has infallibly been, "Zeal without knowledge."—*Ibid.*

[15408] With men of indifferent, frozen temperament, this has been about the most favourite sentence in the Bible. Timid, cowardly men, though otherwise well disposed, very naturally take refuge here. The parsimonious are always ready with this good text. The idolaters of custom, and of everything established and old. An intellectual class, content with mere speculation, and regarding scarcely anything as worth being attempted to be done. With most of these classes of persons, however, it is not that zeal itself, for some use or other, is denied to be a most excellent thing. No, certainly, they

extol it, and "none would be more zealous than they—on a proper occasion." But when can that occasion come? Is it to be an occasion expressly devised, and brought on by Providence for the one simple purpose of enabling them to show that they really possess this high virtue? Or is it to be when the world, and themselves, and all things, are a great deal mended, so that there shall be less difficulty, less to be done, and to be resisted? But who, then, or what, is to do all this that is to be accomplished in the meantime? There are immediately, and constantly at hand, plenty of such things as have always been deemed by zealous men the objects worthy of zeal. But the deficiency of this right spirit never fails to be supplied by ingenuity enough to make out that these are not the proper objects and occasions. How evident it is, therefore, that everything which may be said in the way of disapproving and repressing zeal, should be said cautiously and discriminatively.—*Ibid.*

#### IV. WAYS IN WHICH TRUE ZEAL FOR THE HONOUR OF GOD MAY BE MANIFESTED.

##### By walking "worthy of God."

###### (1) *In the cultivation of reverence.*

[15409] No one, of course, walks worthily of God who ever takes His name upon his lips lightly, or refers in a jesting and trifling spirit to the solemn realities of His word or judgment. These are just the ways in which wicked or even thoughtless persons put God out of sight amongst their companions. No one can suppose that he thinks God of importance who in his very words trifles with Him. On the other hand, a spirit of seriousness at serious times and on serious subjects is one of the strongest, as it is also one of the easiest means of honouring God before others. Let those about you be well aware that, though you may be merry and amusing about other things, you are always grave and reverent, in word and manner, when God's word or works are concerned; that you never allow wit to trespass upon such a province; that you are pained and shocked at the slightest allusion to these subjects in any but a serious spirit: let them see that in God's worship you are always attentive and devout: and you will, so far, be walking worthily of Him, because you will be walking reverently.—*Dean Vaughan.*

###### (2) *In the cultivation of holiness and purity.*

[15410] "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy. . . . Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." In this way, may you walk worthily of God or else unworthily. He whose conversation is impure, he whose heart cherishes impure thoughts, is doing the greatest possible dishonour to a God of holiness. Well may it be said to him, You cannot possibly believe in God; if you did, you could not speak thus; if you did, you could not let your heart be

thus. *Oh, consider this, ye that forget God!* On the other hand, I know of no one who so much witnesses for God, as one who is noticed by his schoolfellows, and remembered by them—as they will remember such persons—in later life, for his perfect purity of speech and conduct at school, as having never let fall from his lips a corrupting word, nor encouraged, by silence or by acquiescence, the utterance of a corrupting word before him.—*Ibid.*

###### (3) *In the cultivation of kindness.*

[15411] When our Lord said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," He said it with regard to kindness. God's power we cannot imitate: God's wisdom we cannot emulate: God's holiness we can but see at an immeasurable distance from us, and adore: but God's kindness—kindness to the unthankful and to the evil—this it is given to man faintly to approach to: we may all walk worthy of God in this sense, if we will. *Oh, what scope there is amongst us here for kindness!* That is what tells: that is what is remembered when a man is gone: "He was kind, always kind;" that is what makes men witnesses for God in the midst of an unloving, a hard, a selfish world. Always to be ready to do a kindness; always to be on the watch for opportunities of showing kindness; always to be charitable towards the failings of others, yet without miscalling good and evil; always to have a soothing word for the weary, and an encouraging word for the fainthearted; yet all this, not for the sake of winning gratitude, not for the sake of attracting praise, but out of a simple and sincere and Christian benevolence, out of a love which reflects and echoes love, even the love of Christ constraining us—this it is, in no mean sense, to walk worthy of God.—*Ibid.*

###### (4) *In the general cultivation of a Christ-like life.*

a. A Christ-like life is the most powerful manifestation of God's honour to the world.

[15412] In every man is a sense of the Divine—a closed, slumbering eye, that may open to perceive it when it comes near. But the men of this world do not perceive the signs of a present God. They may have an indistinct belief in an awful Power existing somewhere in the universe; they may regard Christ as a glorious person of the past, who has ascended into an invisible heaven; but they know nothing of that spiritual emotion which feels the actual presence of the unseen Saviour as a sublime reality. Therefore the great requisite of the worldly man is a revelation of the living Christ that shall come so close to his soul that he must recognize its power. The strongest and clearest revelation is the life of the Christ-like man. Men read the Bible often as an old book, not as a testimony to a living Lord: they find a beauty in nature, but that beauty is not to them the evidence of its invisible King. But a Christ-like man brings the Divine so directly



into the sphere of his own daily life, that they cannot help perceiving it there and then. That man's life becomes a Bible, which in the clearest tones proclaims the presence of his Lord. Nothing on the earth seems to me so truly God-like as such a man. Before his noble charity, his deep sympathy with the sorrowing and the sinful, his firm scorn of the false, and brave adherence to the true—in a word, before that blessed revelation of the indwelling Christ that breathes through his words and sanctifies his deeds, I could almost offer the deep reverence of tears. I would point the sceptic to such a man, and ask him—Is there not something Divine in that life that bears witness to a divinity in Christianity? and challenge him to answer that argument. When men feel *that*, they may ridicule our sermons, they may mock our pretensions, they may doubt our loud professions, and perhaps with some reason; but, if we have only a life that reproduces the image of our Master, they will be compelled to feel His living presence in the world.—*Rev. E. L. Hull.*

b. A Christ-like life is the greatest human influence for bringing men near to God.

[15413] When Christ said to His disciples, "Go and bear fruit, go and reproduce My life in your life," He gave them a power over the world greater than if He had endowed them with the eloquence of angels; for He thus laid hold of the two great forces that mould all human society—influence and example. For the power of social influence is constant and irresistible, while all direct efforts for God are of necessity limited, and awaken opposition in men's hearts. Men hear the appeals of the preacher, and apply them only to their neighbours. His keenest shafts glance aside from the polished armour of religious respectability in which they have clothed their souls. But the ceaseless, silent influence of a Christ-like life enters with its resistless majesty into hearts that are barred and bolted in self-complacency against the preacher's voice, and, like the light, makes their darkness visible. Not only so, but, apart from the Christ-like life of the Church, men may preach with the "tongues of angels," and in vain. The power of the mightiest sermons is often paralyzed by the dead sleep of the Church of God, and men blame their ministers when they should blame themselves.—*Ibid.*

c. A Christ-like life centres all attention on its Divine model.

[15414] A certain eminent artist once resolved to paint the Last Supper. Appreciating the greatness of his subject, and knowing that it had been successfully attempted by others, he threw all his energies into the work. He laboured early and late. No pains were spared by him. He pondered devoutly those pages of the New Testament which record the first sacramental feast, in order that he might do his best to realize and reproduce the memorable scene. At length his task was done. Having given the

finishing stroke, he invited a few confidential friends to a private inspection. They gazed attentively, and various remarks were made. An observation from one of them, however, led, as will be seen, to unexpected results. He spoke with great admiration of a golden chalice represented as being on the table at which our Lord and His disciples sat. Its shape, colour, size, were all that could be desired. "That," exclaimed the critic, "is the most beautiful object in the picture." Hearing what was said, the artist took up a brush, and dipping it in black paint, deliberately smeared it over the whole canvas. He soon explained it—"If," said he, "what you tell me is true, then my picture is a failure, for I meant my Master's face to be the chief and most beautiful object." Who of us can find fault with the painter's vindication of himself? No doubt it was correct in an artistic point of view. In an important effort like that, persons rather than things should obtain prominence. But surely it was correct in another respect. The moral feeling which dictated his self-accusation was noble and right. Christ ought to have the main regard. We may use the anecdote as a parable: it shows what we should be and do. All are artists; a good or bad picture each of us is painting—the picture of life. Too often, alas! men make inferior things the most conspicuous objects on the canvas of their daily history, bestowing rich colours and careful handicraft upon trifles. But the Saviour should be the grand centre of our souls, and should have our chief and first attention.—*T. Stevenson.*

## ZEAL FOR THE CONVERSION OF MAN.

### I. THE OBLIGATORY NATURE AND LONG-SUFFERING OF THIS ZEAL.

[15415] To the sick and broken-spirited even wholesome meats are unpleasant, friends and relations burdensome; who are oftentimes not even recognized, but are rather accounted intruders. Much like this often is the case of those who are perishing in their souls. For the things which tend to salvation they know not; and those who are careful about them they consider to be troublesome. Now this ensues not from the nature of the thing, but from their disease. And just what the insane do, hating those who take care of them, and ever after reviling them, the same is the case with unbelievers also. But as in the case of the former, they who are insulted then more than ever compassionate them, and weep, taking this as the worst symptom of the disease in its intense form, when they know not their best friends; so also in the case of the unbelievers let us act; yea, more than for our wives let us wait over them, because they know not the common salvation. For not so dearly ought a man to love his wife as we should love all mankind,

and draw them over unto salvation, be a man what he may.—*Chrysostom.*

#### II. ITS IMPORTANCE.

[15416] (1) We cannot be Christ's disciples without it. (2) It is an evidence of compassion for the souls of men. (3) It is adapted to stimulate others.—*Parsons.*

[15417] Show me the man who would go to heaven *alone* if he could, and I will show you one who will never be admitted there.—*Owen Feltham.*

#### III. QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE WORK OF WINNING SOULS.

[15418] (1) To possess a high style of Christian character. (2) To be wise in the knowledge of God's truth. (3) To be wise in the knowledge of the human heart.—*E. Medley.*

#### IV. EXEMPLIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THE WORK SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN.

[15419] I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could but gain souls to Christ. While I was asleep, I dreamed of these things, and when I waked, the first thing I thought of was this great work. All my desire was for the conversion of the heathen, and all my hope was in God.—*Brainerd.*

#### V. THE CERTAINTY OF THE CONTINUANCE OF THIS WORK.

[15420] Till heaven and earth shall pass away, the work of rescuing the lost will have to begin again, generation by generation, and day by day. But there is no fear but that with the storms God will send the workmen for the work of rescue;—the old work of rescue from the old perils, waking the new song of redemption, fresh as at first in every heart that learns it fresh from heaven.—*Anon.*

#### VI. THE EXCELLENCE OF THIS WORK.

[15421] To find a noble human soul is gain; it is nobler to keep it; and the noblest and most difficult is to save that which is already lost.—*Herder.*

#### VII. ENCOURAGEMENTS TO THIS WORK.

[15422] Ours is everlasting work, its monuments are to abide for ever; man is frail, and yet it is work done upon him that alone shall stand when all else shall have disappeared; earth's most enduring fabrics shall crumble into dust, the silver and the gold, for which many a man has sold his soul, shall be no more found when the end comes; but one soul turned from the error of its way into the path of life—that shall endure. We are working for eternity,

polishing stones for the heavenly temple, searching for gems with which to deck the Saviour's crown.—*E. Medley.*

[15423] Think of the joy of the heavenly greeting. Who shall speak of the bliss that shall fall to him yonder, to whom one shall declare that it was through his work, and tears, and prayers that ever he came into the Paradise of God? I say think of this, as perhaps you return from your labours dissatisfied and depressed; that greeting is worth the toil of a lifetime. Ah, Christian men and women, are we all ambitious of that most passionless renown, are we all seeking to gather in the lost to Christ, or are we content to go companionless to glory?—*Ibid.*

[15424] There awaits the faithful worker the approval of the Lord, an approval not bestowed according to success, but according to fidelity; we cannot secure the one, but we can, God helping us, secure the other—"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—*Ibid.*

[15425] I think, when men sincerely try to work for God and souls, they are as men who go out to sow seed in a windy day. A few, very few, may drop where they think that they sow all; and when they go to seek for fruit, lo! there is but a handful, and the men are disappointed and grieved. But their seed is growing in other fields, by the wayside, on the mountains, in the forest, everywhere; and at the end they shall be astonished to behold their harvest.—*Ward Beecher.*

[15426] The great encouragements and rewards God propounds, and promiseth to them that win souls, speaks their worth, and God's great esteem of them. There cannot be a more acceptable service done to God, than for a man to set himself heartily and diligently to the conversion of souls: so many souls as a man instrumentally saves, so many diadems will God crown him withal in the great day. St. Paul calls his converted Philippians his joy and his crown (Phil. iv. 1), and tells the converted Thessalonians, they were his crown of rejoicing in the presence of Jesus' Christ at His coming (1 Thess. ii. 19). There is a full reward assured by promise to those that labour in this great service (Dan. xii. 3): "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." The wisdom here spoken of I conceive not to be only that whereby a man is made wise to the salvation of his own soul, but whereby he is also furnished with skill for the saving of other men's souls, according to that (Prov. xi. 30). "He that winneth souls is wise:" and so the latter phrase is exegetical of it, meaning one and the same thing by being wise, and turning many unto righteousness: and to put men upon the study of this wisdom, he puts a very honourable title upon them,

calling them *צדיקים הרבים*, the justifiers of many, as in 1 Tim. iv. 16, they are said to save others. Here is a singular honour put upon the very instruments employed in this honourable service, and that is not all; but their reward is great hereafter, as well as their honour great at present: they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and the stars for ever and ever. The firmament shines like a sapphire in itself, the stars and planets more gloriously again; but those that faithfully labour in this work of saving souls shall shine in glory for ever and ever, when the firmament shall be parched up as a scroll.—*Flavel*.

[15427] Oh, what rewards and honours there are to provoke men to the study of saving souls! God will richly recompense all our pains in this work; if we did but only sow the seed in our days, and another enters into our labours, and waters what we sowed, so that neither the first hath the comfort of finishing the work, nor the last the honour of beginning it; but one did somewhat towards it in the work of conviction, and the other carried it on to greater maturity and perfection, and so neither the one nor the other began and finished the work singly; yet both shall rejoice in heaven together. You see what honours God puts upon the very instruments employed in this work, even the honour to be saviours under God of men's souls (James v. 20), and what a full reward of glory, joy, and comfort they shall have in heaven; all which speaks the great value of the soul with God. Such encouragements and such rewards would never have been propounded and promised if God had not a singular estimation of them.—*Ibid.*

### VIII. WARNINGS AGAINST ITS NEGLECT.

[15428] The more to quicken His instruments to all diligence in this great matter, God works upon their fears as well as hopes; threatens them with hell as well as encourages them with the hope of heaven; tells them He will require the blood of all those souls that perish by their negligence. Their blood, saith He, will I require at the watchman's hands (Ezek. xxxiii. 6), which are rather thunder-bolts than words, saith Chrysostom. By all which you see what weight God lays upon the saving or losing of souls—such severe charges, great encouragements, and terrible threats.—*Ibid.*

### PRAYER.

#### I. PRAYER VIEWED AS A NATURAL INSTINCT AND A RECOGNIZED DUTY OF NATURAL RELIGION.

[15429] Of all the beings here below, man is the only being that prays. Among all the moral instincts of man, there is no one more natural, more universal, more unconquerable, than

prayer. To prayer the child applies himself with eager teachableness. To prayer the aged man falls back, as on a refuge against decay and solitariness. Prayer rises spontaneously to the young lips which can scarcely lisp the name of God, and to the dying lips which have no longer strength to pronounce that name. In all peoples, renowned or obscure, civilized or savage, one meets with acts and set forms of invocation. With joy or with fear, openly or in the secrecy of his heart, it is to prayer that man partakes himself in the last resort, to fill up the void of his soul or to bear the burthens of his destiny. It is in prayer that he seeks, when all is failing him, support for his weakness, comfort in his afflictions, encouragements for his virtue.—*Guizot*.

[15430] Prayer has always been recognized as one of the duties of natural religion. In all ages and among all nations it has been common, by some form or rite, to supplicate Divine protection and favour. Among the golden verses of Pythagoras we find the following:—

“In all thou dost, first let thy prayers ascend,  
And to the gods thy labours first commend;  
From them implore success, and hope a prosperous end.”—*W. Fleming*.

[15431] Nothing proclaims more consistently and universally the connection between man and his Maker, than the fact that in every nation men have felt their dependence on a higher being, and have sought his assistance in prayer. Even the heathen, who call upon a god that cannot save, show thereby their acknowledgment that they have necessities which they cannot satisfy, and that they believe there is some one who can supply their needs (Isa. xvi. 12, xlv. 17, xlv. 20; 1 Kings xviii. 26).—*Rev. R. B. Girdlestone*.

[15432] The Scriptures tacitly assume that prayer was offered to God from the beginning of the world; nor can we conceive otherwise. There were sacrifices from the time of Abel, and where there were sacrifices there must also have been sacrificial prayers. And although we do not read that men began “to call upon the name of the Lord” until after Seth was born, we are forbidden by all commentators to connect this with the origin of prayer. We may therefore conceive that God put into man at his creation the instincts of dependence, of confidence, and of prayer, and that probably no positive ordinance was needed to induce men to cry unto the Lord.—*Ibid.*

#### II. THE PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH THE INSTINCT OF PRAYER IS BASED.

##### 1. Belief in the existence of God.

[15433] Whoever believes truly in God relies upon Providence. God is not an expedient, invented to explain the first link in the chain of causation, an actor called to open by creation the drama of the world, then to relapse into a



state of inert uselessness. By the very fact of His existence, God is present with His work and sustains it. Providence is the natural and necessary development of God's existence; His constant presence and permanent action in creation. The universal and insuperable instinct which leads man to prayer is in harmony with this great fact: "He who believes in God cannot but have recourse to Him, and pray to Him."—*Guizot*.

## 2 Belief in the omniscience of God.

[15434] Were not God all-knowing, He could not be the object of prayer. Of what use would it be to pray to one who seeth us not? But His infinite intelligence is the ground of our confidence. He looketh upon millions with as perfect a comprehension of their whole case as He looketh upon one. He searcheth the heart as well as beholdeth the life; He knoweth our thoughts as well as heareth our words. The groaning that cannot be uttered, He interprets, and heareth the silent petition that is ejaculated from the praying heart. Whether the prayer be presented in the solitude of the vast desert or amidst the haunts of the crowded city, His eye is upon the petitioner.—*Rev. J. Angel James*.

## 3 Belief in the unchangeableness of God.

[15435] The uniformity of nature's operations, and the constancy of God's promises, give aim and calculation and certainty to events; God's promises being so many pledges of His procedure, upon the immutability of which the Christian conceives hope and anticipation, and waits for accomplishment. It is His unchangeableness that gives confidence so soon as you know what His purposes are. Of these purposes the Scripture is the record. They are laws like those of the Medes and Persians, which alter not, and their fulfilment may be built on as securely as the rising of the sun, or the revolution of the heavens, or the most stable of nature's courses. In the administration of justice, its inflexibility or unchangeableness is that very quality which makes all men bold in offering their petitions in its courts. If it were at the call of power, or party, or selfishness, or favoritism, or even of mercy, it would be unheeded, instead of awfully respected, and surely calculated on. So far from hindering men from addressing prayers which are consistent with the laws promulgated, its steadiness of purpose is the very life of all such petitions. . . . Now, it is so not only in matters of justice, but every other department of our affairs. A father that is constant in his procedure is sure to beget expectation, and desire, and confidence in his children; who knowing where to find his will and pleasure, look for it, and converse of it, and calculate on it as a thing secure. A friend that is constant in his friendship, a counsellor that is constant in his wisdom, a master that is constant in his requirements, a man that is consistent in his public or private behaviour—each one of these begets expectation and anticipation, which

are the very food of desire and of prayer. For there is little or no desire of a thing which we have no hope of obtaining. It is the expectation begotten which turns chance or indifference into desire, and the desire to possess is the only thing which can justify the request to obtain. So that without expectation there is no prayer properly so-called, and without constancy of procedure no expectation will be generated; so that constancy is the soul of prayer.—*Edward Irving*.

## 4 Belief in the personality and potentiality of God.

[15436] No God that is hid away in heartless laws, or prisoned in Pantheistic ice, but the friendly God of each separate soul now, as of the elders and prophets—of John and James, of Peter and Simeon, of Mary Magdalene and Jairus's daughter. Judaea did not exhaust His love. He is the God of our houses and streets, and schools as well; of our parents' solicitude, of our children's happiness, of our own frail feet. The Christian's God is a reality. No reality on earth so real! Out of this opens the true doctrine of human intercourse with this God of prayer. It sweeps away the artificial notions and mechanical customs that have grown up around this most natural of the soul's acts, and restores it to its just simplicity. What is natural if not that a child should speak to his parent, dependent weakness to sustaining power, the needy subject to the gracious king—speak his wants, his gratitude, his trust, his hope—speak in the common language that earnest feeling always chooses and always finds; should ask for what none else than this God can give, tell Him the truth because there is a privilege in telling it? And this is prayer.—*Rev. F. D. Huntington, D.D.*

[15437] To an atheist, positive or negative, one who denies that there is a God, or who denies that we can know whether He is or not—to a pantheist, in whose view the life of all things is an eternal force, diffused through eternal matter—to a theist (if such now there be), who, while he believes in God, thinks of Him as of a Creator, who has made the world once for all, and left it to work on by itself under certain laws—to all such men (be it well understood!) prayer is simply a delusion; except, indeed, through those happy inconsistencies, by which a natural instinct often cleaves its way, like the wild fig-tree, through the dead walls of artificial theory. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."—*Ep. Barry*.

## 5 Belief in the reality of the free-will of man, as a true agent under the providence of God, distinct, not in degree, but in kind, from physical force.

[15438] How its freedom co-exists with God's perfect sovereignty, how its liability to misuse is reconciled with God's perfect love, we acknowledge as the insoluble mystery, into which all

others run up. But if we hold it to be a fact, witnessed to at once by our own consciousness, and by the collective consciousness of humanity, embodied in all the languages, laws, institutions of the world—then, and then only, can we pray. So far working and praying go together in the conception they imply. We may put this deeper sense on the old proverb—"Laborare est orare; orare est laborare." Every *a priori* difficulty brought against the possibility of prayer tells equally against the possibility of work. Desire acting on will is the spring of both. If desire and will are no true factors in the work of the universe, we cannot really work; if they are true and powerful factors, then we hold it reasonable not only to work but to pray.—*Ibid.*

**6 Belief in all the consequences which logically follow, from the fact of God's personality, and that of man's free-will.**

[15439] First, that God's government of the world necessarily takes cognisance, both of the world of matter and force, which we call the world of things, and the world of thought and will, which we call the world of persons; next, that, since the two worlds, the physical and the spiritual, absolutely interpenetrate each other (as in the mutual action and reaction of soul on body and of body on soul), it is impossible to separate the two spheres of government; and, lastly, as the soul, with all its marvellous capacities of thought, conscience, affection, will, is a higher and nobler thing than even the grandest form of matter, that of these two elements of God's government the physical must subserve the spiritual, rather than the spiritual be enslaved to the physical. This whole conception is beautifully expressed in the well-known words of St. Paul, "All things work together for good to them that love God." "All things work," each in its own sphere, physical or spiritual. "All things work together," acting and reacting upon one another. "All things work together for good," that good being relative to man, God's highest creature, able to "love God," and "called by Him according to His purpose."—*Ibid.*

**7 Belief and trust in the Fatherhood of God.**

[15440] We see an earthly father moving with free and kindly step within and beneath the laws which he has prescribed for himself, stopping to comfort this child and to correct that, stepping aside to lift up the fallen or bring back the erring; and we best conceive of God when we think of Him as our Father in heaven, observant of law and rule, indeed, yet not bound by them, able so to administer them as to secure the general good, able also so to vary their operation, or so to transcend it, as that He may carry comfort, pardon, and the gifts of His bounty to every seeking and prepared heart. It is on this conception of Him that our Saviour insists, and especially insists when He teaches and encourages us to pray.—*The Expositor.*

[15441] The justification of prayer may be said to rest on a single assumption—that we

have a heavenly Father who cares for us and invites our trust. Those who believe this cannot but pray; out of this faith prayer springs spontaneously, irrepressibly, and is sped heavenwards with the full impulse of reason, desire, and hope. For the children of God here on earth, conscious of frailty and want, and sure of having a gracious Father above, to abstain from prayer to Him, to lay none of their wants before Him, to confide none of their frailties into His bosom, to hope for no response from His goodness, would be nothing short of an acted contradiction, a denial in conduct of an accepted truth. Those who know God as their Father will and must pray.—*Brownlow Maitland.*

[15442] The moment we pass beyond considering God as a mere origin, or cause, or force, or intelligence, and attribute to Him the paternal character with its appropriate affections and purposes; the moment we take as true the Psalmist's description, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him;" then every spiritual instinct and impulse of our nature sends us to Him with our anxieties and wants, confident that He has an ear to hear us, a heart to feel for us, a hand ready to help and bless us.—*Ibid.*

**III. ITS GENERAL DEFINITIONS AND NATURE.**

[15443] What is prayer? The converse of the soul with God. (1) Faith speaking to God. As our senses put us in connection with visible things, so does faith with things unseen; and prayer is the voice of faith. (2) Faith pleading with God. The utterance of strong desire, pleading, with prevailing arguments and irresistible warrants.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[15444] Prayer is not the synonym of petition. Petition itself is not chiefly of earth. Prayer is speaking to God, whatsoever be the voice, the language, the subject of discourse. It may be confession, it may be adoration, it may be thanksgiving, it may be petition. If it be petition, it may be entreaty, it may be deprecation, it may be intercession, it may be for the life, it may be for the soul. Who pretended that a sudden, disjointed, isolated request, uttered once in a way, apart from the spirit and from the life's tone, tenor, and habit, had any promise, any faintest hint of an answer? Prayer is the soul's language in the ear of a God known to be present. A man may pray who asks nothing, who but "dwells in the secret place of the Most High," silent petition, counting it enough to abide under the shadow of the Almighty, the All-loving. The reality of prayer is the meeting of the two spirits, the "I" and the "I am," unto communication, unto converse, unto interchange (with reverence be it spoken) of thought and speech, of life and love. Where this is, prayer is; though nothing be asked and nothing be given save the ineffable grace of the Divine presence.—*Dean Vaughan.*

[15445] He that *muses* toward God prays. If you can conceive of a child in the presence of a parent most beloved that speaks, that is silent, that speaks again, that is again silent; now thought, now fancy, now feeling, in turn, as it were, wheeling the orb of its little mind round completely, so that on every side it receives light and gives forth light to the parent, the intercourse of that child with the parent is the fittest symbol of true prayer. Prayer is the soul of a man moving in the presence of God, for the purpose of communicating its joy, or sorrow, or fear, or hope, or any other conscious experience that it may have, to the bosom of a parent.—*Ward Beecher*.

[15446] Prayer, when, at least, it is formed on the model of the Psalms, is meditation—a meditation on natural and moral verities conducted under a reverent and stimulating sense of that Divine presence which works in and through them all, the Shekinah of the inner temple, the Divine fire which shines through the cloud of our imperfect conceptions.—*The Expositor*.

[15447] Prayer is not necessarily in fluency of speech; it is not in painted imagery; it is not in deep thoughts; it is not in burning words; it is not in the length and breadth and fullness of petition. Prayer is something more: it is the wish of the heart—the expression of the soul.—*Dear*.

[15448] Prayer has been defined to be a wish referred to God; and if we could keep this thought before us, it would help us to acquire the habit of prayer by making us refer each wish, as it comes into our minds, to God, for His assistance in furtherance or frustration.—*J. R. Illingworth*.

[15449] Prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan.—*Bunyan*.

[15450] Prayer is the application of want to Him who alone can relieve it, the voice of sin to Him who alone can pardon it. It is the urgency of poverty, the prostration of humility, the fervency of penitence, the confidence of trust. It is not eloquence, but earnestness; not figures of speech, but compunction of soul. It is the "Lord, save, I perish" of drowning Peter. . . . It is not a mere conception of the mind nor an effort of the intellect, nor an act of the memory, but an elevation of the soul towards its Maker. It is the devout breathing of a creature struck with a sense of its own misery and of the infinite holiness of Him whom it is addressing, experimentally convinced of its own emptiness and of the abundant fullness of God, of His readiness to hear, of His power to help, of His willingness to save. . . . Prayer is right in itself as the most powerful means of resisting sin and advancing in holiness. It is above all might, as everything is, which has the authority of Scripture, the command of God, and the example of Christ.—*Hannah More*.

[15451] Prayer is a term of great latitude, involving the whole compass of our intercourse with God. St. Paul represents it to include our adoration of His perfections; our acknowledgment of the wisdom of His dispensations, and of our obligations for His benefits, providential and spiritual; the avowal of our entire dependence on Him, and of our absolute subjection to Him; the declaration of our faith in Him; the expression of our devotedness to Him; the confession of our own unworthiness, infirmities, and sins; the petition for the supply of our wants, and for the pardon of our offences, for succours in our distress, for a blessing on our undertakings, for the direction of our conduct and the success of our affairs.—*Ibid.*

[15452] Prayer does not consist in sweet feelings, nor in the charms of an excited imagination, nor in that illumination of the intellect that traces with ease the sublimest truths of God; nor even in a certain consolation in the view of God; all these things are external gifts from His hand, in the absence of which love may exist even more purely, as the soul may then attach itself immediately and solely to God, instead of to His mercies.—*Fenelon*.

[15453] Prayer is called pouring out the heart before God. Is the heart full of sins? Pour them out in penitent confessions. Full of sorrows? Pour them out in humble complaints. Full of desires? Pour them out in earnest petitions. Full of joys? Pour them out in rapturous praises.—*W. L. Thornton*.

[15454] Prayer is not a consultation with the highest wisdom which this world can supply. It is not intercourse with an angel or a spirit made perfect. But it is an approach to the living God. It is access to the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity. It is detailing in the ear of Divine sympathy every sorrow. It is consulting with Divine wisdom on every difficulty. It is asking from Divine resources the supply of every want. And this not once in a lifetime, or for a few moments on a stated day of each year, but at any moment, at every time of need.—*Anon.*

[15455] Prayer is that blessed messenger between heaven and earth, holding a correspondence with both worlds, and by a happy intercourse and sure conveyance carrying up the necessities of the one, and bringing down the bounties of the other.—*Robert South, D.D.*

[15456] Prayer and the answer of prayer, according to the popular and we shall even say the natural understanding, are simply, the preferring of a request upon the one side, and compliance with that request upon the other. Man applies, God complies. Man asks a favour, God bestows it. These are conceived to be the two terms of a real interchange that takes place between the parties—the two terms of a sequence, in fact, whereof the antecedent is a



prayer lifted up from the earth, and the consequent is the fulfilment of that prayer by virtue of a mandate from heaven.—*T. Chambers, D.D.*

[15457] Into such labyrinths of confusion, and such mazes of perplexity, has theological thinking brought itself, that a stark rejection of this doctrine is no very rare phenomenon in modern theology, so called. Prayer, instead of that distinct, specific blessed thing—an asking for the sake of receiving, is—what shall we say? or rather, what do some men *not* say it is? A convenient name for almost any reputable deed or any innocent state: prayer is want; prayer is well-doing, or well-wishing; a good life is prayer; to work morally is prayer; to have a general sense of subjection to the Infinite is to pray. There is no enumerating these loose rhetorical, paradoxical, and superficial definitions. The only radical feature in which they are all agreed is in shading off prayer into some other thing that is not prayer, and should have another name; in confounding things that differ; in destroying that one essential ingredient without which no prayer can be—an asking on the part of man for a granting on the part of God.—*F. D. Huntington, D.D.*

[15458] Prayer is the simplest form of speech  
That infant lips can try;  
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach  
The Majesty on high.—*Montgomery.*

#### IV. ITS VARIED ASPECTS AND MODES.

##### 1 Private prayer.

###### *Its blessedness.*

[15459] Private prayer is our refuge from troubles. High above the beating waves, and near heaven, it is our fortress. What sometimes would become of us, if we might not shut the door upon mankind, and find repose in our Father's bosom? The afflicted Christian, entering his citadel, says, like persecuted David, "I give myself unto prayer." Thou, who knowest all, and changest never, art on my side. If I grieve any, I would not grieve Thee. I would not make Thee my enemy. I would retain Thy favour. Oh my Almighty Friend, "say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." Heavenly Father, Thy smile invigorates me. I am glad and safe when I hear Thy voice. Thou dost arm me against my foes.—*Robinson.*

[15460] Leave not off praying to God; for either praying will make thee leave off sinning, or continuing in sin will make thee desist from praying.—*Thomas Fuller, D.D.*

[15461] Prayer purifies; it is a self-preached sermon.—*Richter.*

##### 2 Secret prayer.

###### *(1) Its nature.*

[15462] We read in Scripture of a prayer that is without speech or language; it has no sound to the world of sense, but has only to do with

the world of spirit. Such was Nehemiah's in the presence of the king, and such was Hannah's when her lips moved and no words were heard.—*W. Harris.*

[15463] Every man can build a chapel in his breast, himself the priest, his heart the sacrifice, and the earth he treads on the altar.—*Bp. Taylor.*

[15464] In prayer it is better to have a heart without words, than words without a heart.—*Bunyan.*

###### *(2) The comfort of secret commune with God.*

[15465] When could I ever speak to man all the longings of my secret self? But between us and our Christ the windows are wide open. In secret prayer it is permitted unto each of us to commune soul with soul, to speak and be understood, to tell the whole long story of our life, in need, in guilt, in love, and fond desire. If we will, we may sit the livelong day of our life, conscious that each moment He is gazing down, within easy reach of faintest whisper. We may watch the play of Divine joy and sorrow on that Heavenly Face, as He on the face human.—*J. Haynes.*

##### 3 Family prayer.

###### *Its importance and advantages.*

[15466] That it draws down the blessing of God upon the domestic circle needs no proof, for we have for our encouragement, not only the general promises made to prayer, but the special assurance that "where two or three are gathered in Christ's name, He will be with them;" and we have further, the evidence of actual experience. Of the students in a large theological seminary, all but one had been reared at the family altar. Of the young who come forward to our communion, far the largest proportion have been accustomed to kneel in the praying circle at home. One must shut his eyes, not only against God's promises, but against reason and facts, ere he can assert that households sanctified by united prayer have no security above such as are not, for the welfare of the souls of their inmates, and particularly of the young. Even where children grow up seemingly unblest by such influences, and are long hardened in profligacy, the remembrance of home scenes, and above all of a parent's prayers in the midst of them, will leave one soft place in the hard heart for conviction to enter, so that like certain animals covered with scales which turn the spear except in one little spot, the enmity of the carnal mind may there be pierced and slain. If we value the salvation of our loved ones we shall not neglect this means of securing it.—*Rev. W. H. Lewis.*

[15467] The restraining influence of domestic worship upon all the annoyances and disturbers of domestic peace is most powerful and valuable. Who can kneel down and pray daily before his family against a sin which he habitually commits? How can the inmates of a dwelling

cherish unkind feelings towards each other while united in common prayer? Twice a day peace must be proclaimed in each praying family, and love must regain the ascendancy, and that must be indeed a hardy tree of sin which is not withered and stunted by such a continued and destructive application at its roots. As a help to family government this means is invaluable. Those who have rude, ungovernable, headstrong children that give them sorrow and shame now, as well as anxiety for the future, have probably never tried this remedy, more effectual than words of reproof or chastisement, adding efficacy to all other appliances in family discipline.—*Ibid.*

[15468] If there is anything which has a tendency to remind old and young of their obligations to God, and of their dependence upon Him, it is their meeting together, morning and evening, as a Christian family, to thank Him for His favours past and to beg for a continuance of His goodness. What an incentive to exertion during the day; what a safeguard against temptation and sin to remember that we have asked the good Lord to "direct us in all our doings," and to keep us from the evil! And when the curtains of night are drawn, and darkness and dangers compass us around, what a privilege to commit ourselves and all that belongs to us to the care of that watchful Guardian, who is about our path and about our bed, and who keepeth those in perfect peace whose minds are stayed on Him! "If the relative affections have declined during the day, the evening service, like the dew of heaven, revives and enlivens them. If offences have come, they are easily forgiven when all are asking for pardon for themselves. Every angry word, every wrong temper, every petulant feeling, flies before the hallowing influence of social worship." Twice each day peace is thus proclaimed in every praying household, and the God of peace is present there to bestow His blessing.—*Rev. J. R. Norton.*

[15469] Around each pure, domestic shrine  
Bright flowers of Eden bloom and twine;  
Our hearths are altars all;  
The prayers of hungry souls and poor,  
Like armed angels at the door,  
Our unseen foes assail.—*Kemble.*

[15470] The training of a genuine, practically all-embracing, all-imbuing family religion, makes the families so many little churches, only they, indeed, are as much better, in many points, as they are more private, closer to the life of infancy, and more completely blended with the common affairs of life. Here it is that chastity, modesty, temperance, industry, truth—all the virtues that give beauty, and worth, and majesty to character, get their root. Here it is, above all, that they who are born into life are led up, in their gracious training, to knit the green tendrils of existence to God. And so, in all the future scenes of duty, and wrong, and grief through which they were to pass, it will be

found that they were furnished here with supplies of grace, and armed with shields of confidence from God, to meet every encounter, bear every burden, and maintain every kind of well-doing, till the victory of life is won.—*H. Bushnell.*

[15471] Social worship is enjoined upon us, because we are social beings, and are bound together by mutual wants and sympathies. The head of every family occupies a most responsible position, and is furnished with authority and influence which he is expected to exert for the good of those under his control. He is enabled to form an intimate acquaintance with the character and habits, the wants and weaknesses of all beneath his roof—an acquaintance which no one else can possibly gain. Moreover, this influence begins at the very period when the most lasting impressions are made, and the destinies of his family determined for time and for eternity. Whatever we wish *others* to practise, we must practise *ourselves*, and nothing is so well calculated to impress the young with a conviction of the importance of prayer as the being called together morning and evening to unite in family worship. Christians who neglect this duty will have a great deal to answer for in the day of final account. I have a boyish recollection of the shudder which crept over me on hearing a playmate say of his father, who was a member of the Church, "My father never prays!" He, no doubt, attended regularly to his *private* devotions, but, from never having seen him thus employed, the child naturally concluded that prayer was altogether neglected by him. "Hold the little hands in prayer; teach the weak knees their kneeling; let him see thee speaking to thy God; he will not forget it afterwards; when old and gray, will he feelingly remember a mother's tender piety, and the touching recollection of her prayers shall arrest the strong man in his sin" (Tupper's "Proverbial Philosophy").—*Rev. J. R. Norton.*

[15472] It diffuses a sympathy through the members: it calls off the mind from the deadening effect of worldly affairs; it arrests every member with a morning and evening sermon in the midst of all the hurries and cares of life; it says, "There is a God, there is a spiritual world, there is a life to come!"—*K. Cecil.*

#### 4 Ejaculatory prayer.

(1) *Its nature and force.*

[15473] Ejaculatory prayer is prayer darted up from the heart to God, not at stated intervals, but in the course of our daily occupations and amusements. The word "ejaculatory" is derived from the Latin word for a dart or arrow, and there is an idea in it which one would be loath indeed to forfeit.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[15474] Imagine an English archer, strolling through a forest in the old times of Crecy and Agincourt, when the yeomen of this island were trained to deliver their arrows with the same

unfailing precision as "a left-handed Gibeonite" discharging a stone bullet from his sling. A bird rises in the brushwood under his feet, a bird of gorgeous plumage or savoury flesh. He takes an arrow from his quiver, draws his bow to its full stretch, and sends the shaft after the bird with the speed of lightning. Scarcely an instant elapses before his prey is at his feet. It has been struck with unerring aim in the critical part, and drops on the instant. Very similar in the spiritual world is the force of what is called ejaculatory prayer. The Christian catches suddenly a glimpse of some blessing, deliverance, relief, a longing after which is induced by the circumstances into which he is thrown. Presently it shall be his. As the archer first draws the bow in towards himself, so the Christian retires, by a momentary act of recollection, into his own mind, and there realizes the presence of God. Then he launches one short, fervent petition into the ear of that awful Presence, throwing his whole soul into the request. And, lo! it is done! The blessing descends, prosecuted, overtaken, pierced, fetched down from the vault of heaven by the winged arrow of prayer.—*Ibid.*

[15475] Ejaculatory prayer is the intermingling of devotion with action, . . . the meeting-point of prayer and service.—*Ibid.*

[15476] Ejaculations take not up any room in the soul. They give liberty of callings, so that at the same instant one may follow his proper vocation. The husbandman may dart forth an ejaculation, and not make a baulk the more. The seaman, nevertheless, steers his ship right in the darkest night. Yea, the soldier at the same time may shoot out his prayer to God, and aim his pistol at his enemy, the one better hitting the mark for the other. The field wherein bees feed is no whit the barer for their biting; when they have taken their full repast on flower or grass, the ox may feed, the sheep fatten on their reversons. The reason is, because those little chemists distil only the refined part of the flower, leaving the grosser substance thereof. So ejaculations bind not men to any bodily observance, only busy the spiritual half, which makes them consistent with the prosecution of any other employment. In hard havens, so choked up with the envious sand that great ships drawing many feet of water cannot come near, lighter and lesser pinnaces may freely and safely arrive. When we are time-bound, place-bound, so that we cannot compose ourselves to make a large, solemn prayer, this is the right instant for ejaculations, whether orally uttered or only poured forth inwardly in the heart.—*Fuller.*

(2) *Its relative importance.*

[15477] Service and prayer are the web and woof of the Christian life, of which every part of it is composed. Both are in the ground-work of the stuff. Not even in point of time must they be too rigidly sundered from one another.

Prayer at stated seasons is good and necessary; but a man aiming at sanctity, in ever so low a degree, will find it impossible to confine his prayers to stated seasons. He will soon discover that prayer is literally, and not merely in a figure, "the Christian's breath of life;" and that to attempt to carry on the spiritual life without more prayer than the recital of a form on rising and retiring to rest is about the same absurdity as it would be for a man to open his casement morning and evening and inhale the fresh air for a few minutes, and then say to himself on closing it that that amount of breathing must suffice him for the rest of the day. The analogy suggested by this image is, I believe, a perfectly true one, and will hold good if examined. The air from the casement is very delicious, very healthful, very refreshing, very invigorating; it is a good thing to stand at the casement and inhale it; but there must be air in the shop, in the factory, in the office, as well as at the casement, if the man, as he works, is to survive. Under this view of it, ejaculatory prayer is seen to be even a more essential thing than stated prayer. Both are necessary to the well-being of Christian life; but the momentary lifting the heart to God, the momentary realization of His presence amidst business or under temptation, is necessary to its very being. The life is no more when the work is suspended. For which reason probably it is that the great apostolic prayer-precept is given with a breadth which excludes all limitations of time and place, "Pray without ceasing."—*Dean Goulburn.*

(3) *Its advantage.*

[15478] The mind wants steadying and setting right many times a day. It resembles a compass placed on a rickety table; the least stir of the table makes the needle swing round and point untrue. Let it settle, then, till it points aright. Be perfectly silent for a few moments, thinking of Jesus; there is an almost Divine force in silence. Drop the thing that worries, that excites, that interests, that thwarts you; let it fall, like a sediment, to the bottom, until the soul is no longer turbid; and say secretly, "Grant, I beseech Thee, merciful Lord, to Thy faithful servant pardon and peace; that I may be cleansed from all my sins, and serve Thee with a quiet mind." Yes; with a quiet mind. We cannot serve Him with a turbid one; it is a mere impossibility. Thus composing ourselves from time to time, thus praying and setting the mind's needle true, we shall little by little approximate towards that devout frame, which binds the soul to its true centre, even while it travels through worldly business, worldly excitements, worldly cares.—*Ibid.*

[15479] I like ejaculatory prayer; it reaches heaven before the devil can get a shot at it.—*Rowland Hill.*

5 *Intercessory prayer.*

(1) *Its importance in regard to religious revivals.*

[15480] Revivals of religion have begun by



intercessory prayer in the Church. Dr. Franklin hits the truth when he says, "Kindle the dry sticks, and the green ones will catch."—*Anon.*

(2) *Its advantages and reflex influence.*

[15481] As regards this matter of intercessory prayer, I believe in it. I believe in it heartily. I believe it is good to pray, because I think God will answer prayer. I believe He will answer prayers which you make earnestly and pertinaciously for others. I think that He is better pleased with, and is more apt to answer benevolent prayers than selfish prayers. In the next place, I think it does you good to pray for others. It comforts you. It develops the best part of your nature. Then, in the third place, it expands your blessing and bounty. It opens a large field for your sympathy and love.—*Ward Beecher.*

(3) *Homiletical hints.*

[15482] (1) Intercession in one form or other enters into all God's plans of mercy and grace. The intercession of Christ for His Church. The intercession of the Church for the world.

(2) Intercessory prayer was not only enforced by the Scriptures and by the law, but established by example. Abram for Sodom. Job for his children. Moses for Israel. Joshua, Nehemiah, Ezra, Paul. Church at Jerusalem for Peter (Acts xii. 5). Christ for His Church (John xvii.).

(3) Intercessory prayer is a means of positive benevolence: an agency by which we can act, and by which we can do good. Not the most eloquent or active; but those who *pray* the most. We can pray for our friends as we cannot talk to them.

(4) Intercessory prayer is a means of great benefit to ourselves. It has a reflex influence on the heart. To omit it is sin; to do it is a part of universal righteousness, acceptable to God. "God forbid," said Paul, "that I should cease to pray for you." The disciples were directed to say, when they entered a house, "Peace be to this house," &c.

(5) Intercessory prayer will be remembered in heaven, and perhaps add to its felicity. Stephen prayed for his murderers, perhaps for Saul.

(6) Intercessory prayer is confined to the present world, and must be done here or not at all. David prayed for his child, *while he lived*. There is no instance of prayer to the glorified Church. No ground to expect help from them. When Christ was going to His Father, He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away," &c. (John xvi. 7); because He was to intercede for them; but Paul said, "I am in a strait betwixt two." He knew that he could serve them on earth, but not in heaven.

(7) Intercessory prayer is to be regarded as to the sphere of its operations. Families, societies, &c. Particular churches. Minister, members, &c. The universal Church. University, missionaries. Members of the great family of mankind.

(8) *Improvement.* *a.* Guard against formality

by being specific. *b.* Persevere. Example: Woman of Canaan. *c.* Do not put this duty in the place of others. *d.* Do not pray only, but admonish also your children, friends, &c.—*T. Binney.*

6 *Extemporaneous prayer.*

*Arguments in its favour.*

[15483] At certain times of strong emotions our religious feelings outrun any form of words. In such cases, not only is there no need of forms of prayer, but it is perhaps impossible to write forms of prayer for Christians agitated by such feelings. For each man feels in his own way—perhaps no two men exactly alike—and we can no more write down how men ought to pray at such times than we can give rules how they should weep or be merry. The better men they are, of course, the better they will pray in such a trying time; but you cannot make them better; they must be left to themselves. And, though good men have before now set down in writing forms of prayer for persons so circumstanced, these were doubtless meant rather as patterns and helps, or as admonitions and (if so be) quietings of the agitated mind, than as prayers which it was expected would be used literally and entirely in their detail.—*Cardinal Newman.*

[15484] No written prayer, unaided by devotional exercises drawn from the heart, can suit the ever-varying circumstances in the Divine life. Its plans and designs against its spiritual enemies must be formed, like the plans of a general upon the field of battle, from an actual observation; he regulates his movements from actual inspection, and makes his arrangements on the spot according to the existing circumstances in which he is placed; for there are dangers which cannot be foreseen, and positions taken up by the enemy, as well as calamities of war to be met and encountered with on the spot. Such is the actual state of every soul which is actively fighting the good fight of faith—the soul is a little world where nothing is at rest, but all its powers and faculties are continually exercised in the war between the flesh and the spirit. The soul which really lives to God is engaged in a perpetual warfare. Look at a general. His plans and designs cannot be fixed and stationary, but are ever varying. As he regulates his movements, so must the believer. His plans and designs as to his spiritual enemies can only arise from the actual circumstances in which he is placed. To mortify sins, and keep down the risings of corruption—to resist the encroachments of a worldly spirit, and the temptations of Satan—to be making fresh advances in faith, love, and hope, is the daily business in hand; but our losses, trials, temptations, enemies to be resisted, are always presenting new and various aspects, and prayer must be suited to the special wants and temptations of the day.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[15485] Life is not usually a procession of emergencies. Men ought always to pray. And

they ought to pray, not only in the language which will be found extremely precious in an emergency, but they ought to pray during the healthful monotony of an industrious life. Here is where venerable manuals of prayer usually fail us. No doubt he that is familiar with all their pages can find something in them specially suited to each and every day of still life; but as there is very little to characterize or distinguish one day from another, so there is very little by which to judge and select the prayers that are fit. A well-phrased prayer covers an average day, as a snow-fall hides the little ruts and hoof-marks of a common road. It makes all days and all roads seem alike. And while each day, however insignificant, is made up of details which, one by one, absorb the attention, tax the industry, fill the life, and mould the character, the prayer for that day articulates no detail, but blankets the whole. Thus it comes to pass that daily duty means something definite, while daily prayer has little or no articulation of detail. Under such conditions prayer must necessarily become uninteresting, powerless.—*T. K. Beecher.*

[For Liturgical Prayer, see "Advantages of the English Liturgy," Division F of this Section, pp. 170-172.]

## V. ITS REQUISITES.

### I. On the human side of things.

#### (1) *Thoughtfulness.*

[15486] "To Thee will I direct my prayer." This is a word that means business. It expresses with terse, tight brevity the resolve of one who is going to *work* at prayer; and to work in a cool, deliberate, orderly way. A mistake is commonly latent, to the effect that prayer is something outside the sphere of common sense, and that it implies a state of idle reverie, or exalted intoxication, in which the soul dreams its way through a dialect of dead words and stereotyped phraseology never heard at any other time. I mean something exactly the opposite of all this. When I speak about prayers, I speak as a man of business about a matter of business, and not about a matter of mystical rapture. "To direct," as I understand the term, is a term of archery—the term of a man in earnest, who fits an arrow to the string and levels it with a determination to hit the mark. To direct your prayers means to take a calm, thoughtful, deliberate aim. To direct your prayer, you must think before you speak; give your mind to what you are about, and, as Matthew Henry says, *strike at the white.*—*Charles Stanford, D.D.*

#### (2) *Definiteness.*

[15487] The speech of the mouth must not go before, but always follow after the conception of the mind. Many times as a musician's fingers will run over a song which he has been used to play, although his mind is otherwise occupied; so many in prayer will run over that form of words they have been used to utter, though their

minds are roving about other matters. Oh, let the absurdity of the fault breed in us a loathing of it!—*Ambrose.*

[15488] Life is made up of single particulars, both of doing and suffering, both of sin and duty; and the prayer which has respect to it must be not vague and general, but particular and even minute. The great enemy will assail me to-day, not in some grand sweeping charge, which every energy of my soul will be forewarned and fore-armed to encounter—but in detail; in a multitude of light skirmishings and small ambushes, the very meaning of which will be often doubtful, and their result apparently indecisive. Yet is it in these things that the course of the life shapes itself, and the destiny of the life is at last determined. A succession of little defeatings makes up at last a rout and a ruin. If I wait to defend myself, till the Imperial Foe, in person and presence, places himself at the head of his guards and stakes all upon one last effort—the battle is decided before it is waged, and the soul which would not arm must pay the price in discomfiture. So then, prayer, which is the arming of the soul, must have respect to the items of the conflict even more than to the sum. A vague petition for grace—a general entreaty for God's strength and protection through the day that is dawning—a summary view of duty and temptation, and an indiscriminating invocation of the enabling and preserving spirit—will not be found to have brought God (so to speak) into the very heart and body of the day's life: superficial prayer can look only for a superficial answer; and the intentions and resolutions of the slight asker are but as tow when it toucheth the fire, in face of the wily stratagems or fiery onslaughts of spiritual wickedness in high places. The prayer which would affect action must be minute and detailed as well as earnest.—*Dean Vaughan.*

[15489] When we say our prayers, we are thinking about God—a very pious and profitable exercise no doubt, and without which our spirits will never rise into the state of silent and spiritual worship—but this is not prayer itself, but only the preparation for it. We must first lay the wood in order, and then light the dry sticks of logical conceptions, if the fire is to be kindled in our spirits, and we are to feel the presence of God there.—*J. B. Heard, M.A.*

#### (3) *Solemnity.*

[15490] We utter our little thought to the everlasting thought—our poor cry to the Sustainer of the worlds. To feel this is profoundly difficult. We are such slaves to the visible and the apparent. We don't realize that we are actually now in the presence-chamber of God. Many of our prayers are uttered from a formal sense of duty or the force of habit to some being—we scarcely dare ask who; they rise not from the depths of the heart, but from the outward machinery of habitual impulse that carries on so much of the unconscious action of our lives. Many of them are the offspring of moments of

excited emotion, transient flashes of fire that light up the spirit's atmosphere with passing brilliancy and then suddenly expire. Such prayers are often hard, convulsive, frantic in their vehemence, but with all their tumult they are but movements on the surface, not outbursts from the deep, silent, secret waters of the soul. Hence, in such prayers we grasp not the mighty fact of the Eternal Presence, and plead not with resistless energy the truth of the eternal promise; we do not, to use the words of Isaiah, "take hold on God." But when, touched by the Divine Spirit, we rouse all the powers of our being to realize the Divine Presence as an overwhelming reality—not a cold faith in the mere existence of the Deity, but the conviction that He is the sublime reality before which all visible things are shadows—that He is a Presence nearer to us than friend or brother—a Presence in actual contact with our spirits; then it is we feel the solemnity of asking.—*Rev. E. L. Hull, B.A.*

[15491] We are prone to think of God as enthroned in the far-off immensities of heaven, hence the little cares of life and the fascinations of the visible crowd out our perception of Him, and we are not roused into intense devotion. But if we once realize that there is no place where He is not; that everything is vital with His living energy; that He is as much in what we call small things as great—in the homes of men as in the depths of space; as much in the dewdrop as in the lightning flash, in the seashell, with its marvellous beauty, as in the stars in their mighty march; that He is close to us, "compassing us behind and before;" and if, taking one step further, we realize that by His Spirit He is specially nearer the praying soul—that the Divine breath is quickening the prayer, while the great Spirit waits to catch the voice; that prayer is the cry of His child, and that the Father, amid His universe, listens to its call: I say, if this be felt, must we not feel the solemnity of asking? Is it possible, then, to pray mechanically or formally? Then the deeper meaning of prayer becomes unveiled, and under its glory we truly pray, for "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities."—*Ibid.*

(4) *Naturalness and simplicity.*

[15492] Ask in simplicity. True need forgets to be formal. Its utterances fly from the heart as sparks from a blacksmith's anvil. Set phrases, long sentences, polysyllabic words, find little favour with the soul that is athirst for God and His grace. How brief are the sentences of the immortal and immutable prayer which Christ taught His disciples! Not a long word is there. Temptation is the longest, and the majority of the words are of one syllable. Do you essay to lead others in prayer? Utter no word that any that hear you cannot understand. Express their need as well as your own. Do not go to the mercy-seat on stilts.—*R. M. Oford.*

[15493] To men we use rhetoric, eloquence,

because they are influenced by it. To God we use the simplest, shortest words we can find, because eloquence is only air and noise to Him.—*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*

(5) *Sincerity and fervour.*

[15494] An arrow if it be drawn up but a little way goes not far, but if it be pulled up to the head flies swiftly and pierces deep. Thus prayer, if it be only dribbled forth from careless lips, falls at our feet. It is the strength of ejaculation and strong desire, which sends it to heaven and makes it pierce the clouds. It is not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how eloquent they be; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they be; nor the music of our prayers, how sweet our voice may be; nor the logic of our prayers, how argumentative they may be; nor the method of our prayers, how orderly they may be; nor even the divinity of our prayers, how good the doctrine may be,—which God cares for. He looks not for the horny knees which James is said to have had through the assiduity of prayer. We might belike Bartholomew, who is said to have had a hundred prayers for the morning, and as many for the evening, and all might be of no avail. "Fervency of spirit" is that which availeth much.—*Bp. Hall.*

[15495] Prayer is not a smooth expression, or a well-contrived form of words; not the product of a ready memory, or of a rich invention exerting itself in the performance. These may draw a neat picture of it, but still the life is wanting. The motion of the heart God-wards, holy and Divine affection, makes prayer real and lively, and acceptable to the living God, to whom it is presented; the pouring out of thy heart to Him who made it, and therefore hears it, and understands what it speaks, and how it is moved and affected in calling on Him. It is not the gilded paper and good writing of a petition that prevails with a king, but the moving sense of it. And to that King who discerns the heart, heart-sense is the sense of all, and that which only He regards; He listens to hear what that speaks, and takes all as nothing where that is silent. All other excellence in prayer is but the outside and fashion of it; this is the life of it.—*Abp. Leighton.*

(6) *Reverent boldness and importunity.*

[15496] When you have been convinced that God cares for His creatures, and have therefore begun, in the Mediator's name, to pray; when you have not only said a prayer in fulfilment of a commanded duty, but felt a want, and like a little child requested your Father in heaven to supply it, another lesson concerning prayer remains still to be learned,—to persevere. When you have asked once—asked many times, and failed to obtain relief, you are tempted to lose hope and abandon prayer. Ask as a hungry child asks its mother for bread. It is not a certain duty prescribed, so that when you



have performed it you are at liberty to go away. Nor is it, Ask so many times—whether seven or seventy times seven: it is, Ask until you obtain your desire. When the Lord desired especially to commend importunity in prayer, He selected a case which teaches importunity, and nothing more. He gives us an example in which unceasing pertinacity alone triumphed over all obstacles, and counsels us to go and do likewise when we ask good things of our Father who is in heaven. . . . The term *ἀναίδεια* (Luke xi. 5-8), translated “importunity,” signifies freedom from the bashfulness which cannot ask a second time. The shamefacedness which prevents a modest man from importuning a fellow-creature for a gift, after the first request has been refused, is out of place in the intercourse between an empty but believing suppliant and the God of all grace.—*Rev. W. Arnot.*

[15497] For spiritual blessings, let our prayers be importunate, perpetual, and persevering; for temporal blessings, let them be general, short, conditional, and modest.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

[15498] Prayer pulls the rope below, and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give but an occasional pluck at the rope; but he who wins with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously, with all his might.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

[15499] Drexellius tells us of a vision that a religious man had at his prayers in the congregation. He saw a several angel at the elbow of every one person, ready to write down his petitions: those who prayed heartily, their angels wrote down their suits in gold: those that prayed but coldly and carelessly, their angels wrote too, but it was with water: those that prayed customarily, only from the teeth outward, had their angels by them, who seemed to write, but it was with a dry pen, no ink in it: such as slept had their angels by them, but they laid their pens by: such as had worldly thoughts, their angels wrote in the dust: and such as had envious and malicious spirits, their angels wrote with gall. If this be so, I fear few angels have wrote this day in golden letters; but the pens of the others have gone very fast. Have a care how thou prayest, if thou wouldest have them written with the golden pen.—*R. Rogers.*

#### (7) Faith and earnestness.

[15500] Faith furnishes prayer with wings, without which it cannot soar to heaven.—*John Climacus.*

[15501] Faithful prayer always implies correlative exertion; and no man can ask honestly and hopefully to be delivered from temptation unless he has himself honestly and firmly determined to do the best he can to keep out of it.—*John Ruskin.*

[15502] The more earnestly we pray, the more must we also *strive* in prayer. An innate

indolence and sloth belongs to our corrupt nature, a law of gravity, that would ever drag us down to the earth, and hinder the soul from soaring. Mists are without intermission arising from our sinful flesh, which hide the sun from our inner eye. The sun stands with its usual brightness in the heaven; but it is our earthly atmosphere that hides it from us. Prayer thus must show itself as earnest will, as an act of freedom that penetrates and tears asunder the mist. But, that we may conquer in this, it will at the same time be indispensable for us so to arrange our whole mode of life that the life of prayer suffer no hindrance by it. The same Saviour who has made it our duty to pray, says also, “Take heed lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness” (Luke xxi. 34). Every preponderance of the flesh over the spirit, every sinking of the spirit into the life of nature, every surrender to the dominion of matter, hinders prayer, which just depends upon this, that the spirit tears itself free from the pressure and service of matter, that it raises itself aloft into the pure and light air of eternity.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[15503] Lord! make me to bestow pains in getting those things for the obtaining of which I use to pray to Thee.—*Sir T. More.*

#### (8) Trust and submission.

[15504] The character of prayer is defined and limited by the fact which justifies it. For to say that we come to God with our petitions because we believe Him to be our Father, is the same as to say that we come to Him because we feel ourselves to be His children. It is, then, the children’s prayer which is justifiable prayer. But the children ought to trust in the Father’s wisdom and goodness, to submit to the Father’s will, and to be in harmony with the Father’s mind. Hence arise three qualifications of prayer, which are necessary to its justification—trust, submission, harmony with the mind of God; and each of these accordingly is prescribed in Scripture to regulate Christian prayer. Trust: for we are to “ask in faith” (James i. 6), to “believe when we pray” (Mark xi. 24); toargue from our own parental feelings to God’s, “how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him” (Matt. vii. 11). Submission: for Christ’s prayer is our pattern; “Not My will, but Thine be done” (Luke xxii. 42). Harmony with the mind of God: for “if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us.” It is to prayer framed in this spirit that the promises of the Gospel belong; these are the conditions which evidently underlie all the wonderful sayings of the Bible about the efficacy of prayer.—*B. Mailland.*

[15505] It is not merely on the authority of the Bible that the limitations of acceptable prayer rest; they have their foundations in the same intuitions of the spiritual consciousness on which our belief in God is based. Even had it been announced to us, on authority which

claimed for itself the Divine sanction, that suspicious hearts could by entreaty force God to give, or that rebellious hearts could bend His will to their own desires, or that hearts which craved improper things could snatch them from Him by importunity; it would have been impossible for us to believe any one of those things, for they would contradict those ultimate intuitions which lie at the root of our belief in God and revelation. A Being who could suffer Himself to be controlled by the petitions of the unfilial, the self-willed, or the impure, could in no sense be the God to whom our souls aspire.—*Ibid.*

[15506] Devotion is not, properly speaking, an emotion of the heart, nor a spiritual consolation; but is rather a certain willingness and readiness in yielding to those things which appertain to the service of God. For devotion is derived of bowing; wherefore they are called devout who, after a certain manner, do devote and bow themselves unto God, that they may wholly subject themselves under Him.—*Thomas Aquinas.*

[15507] The common idea of prayer is—that it resembles the magic ring in the Oriental tale—as if it gave a power to man to bend the will of God. But take as a crucial test the prayer of Christ—"Father, if it be possible, remove this cup from Me." Here were all the requisites of true prayer—humility, perfect submission, true faith; yet the cup did not pass from Him. Think you that your prayers will get what Christ's did not—what you wish? Nay, but something better than what you wish—what God wills. Is that not better? The true value of prayer is not this—to bend the Eternal Will to ours; but this—to bend our wills to it.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

[15508] Divines constantly recommend that we should pray with resignation, for though we ought never to prefer a petition which we do not believe in our sincere judgment beneficial and proper for us to attain, yet we may be mistaken, in which case God will not give us the thing we desire, but a better in lieu; nor will He alter His measures upon our request, but give that which He has already made our devotion a natural means to obtain. So that if we ask with devotion we may be sure of receiving, not perhaps the very thing we have set our hearts upon, but some improvement in our spiritual part, more valuable and more conducive to our present solace of mind and to our future interests.—*A. Tucker.*

(9) *A sense of need.*

[15509] There must be a feeling and former apprehension of our wants. By which means a man shall the willinglier pray for a supply of the same. If we do not find the fever, feel the fits, be not pressed with it as with a heavy burden; no man will seek to the physician that is not sick; care for a fire that is not a cold; creep to a fountain that is not a dry: so there

must be a sense of want and misery before men be induced to pray.—*J. Smith.*

(10) *Due preparation and engagedness of heart.*

[15510] Ezra "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it," to disengage his mind from vain imaginations, from worldly thoughts, from everything, in short, foreign to the spirit of religion. By a diligent perusal of a portion of the Word of God we are prepared to approach Him. By hearing Him when He speaks to us we are fitted to speak to Him. He who rushes into the presence of the Most High without solemn deliberation, without reflecting on the weighty and serious nature of such an undertaking, can with little propriety be said to have "engaged his heart."—*Rev. R. Hall, M.A.*

[15511] Prayer is not a duty to be entered upon rashly and without preparation. If we pass into the Almighty's presence, recking as it were, of the earth, not pausing on the threshold to compose and solemnize the mind by a deliberate act of reflection and examination, it can hardly be wondered at that we find slight, if any comfort, in drawing nigh unto our Father which is in heaven.—*Rev. H. Melvill, B.D.*

(11) *A quiet mind and calmness of spirit.*

[15512] Prayer is in all ordinary cases, and it ought to be, a calm and peaceful exercise, not an agitating one. Some persons waste the hour of prayer in trying to feel deep agitation, imagining that sincere and acceptable prayer cannot be offered without it. You must be sincere when you pray, but you may be calm. Read our Saviour's model of prayer. . . . What a peaceful, quiet spirit it breathes! The only question in regard to your prayer being acceptable is this:—Do you wish for anything which you know no one but God can grant, and are you willing to ask Him in the name of Jesus Christ? If so come at once and ask Him. That is what is necessary to constitute prayer. Ask with that degree of feeling which your interest in the request prompts, and no more. If you wish to increase your feeling, you cannot do it in any way except by seeking deeper interest in the requests. You may obtain a much more correct estimate of the value of the object sought, by thinking of it, and considering how great a blessing it would be to you if granted, and thus you may increase your ardour in prayer. But all direct attempts to produce this ardour by effort will fail, or if they succeed in producing some sort of excitement, it is not a healthy state of mind.—*Jacob Abbott.*

[15513] We cannot let the winds blow from the four corners of the world, stirring our hearts into restless agitations, and then at the moment when we will, command a calm. None but the Prince of Peace could do this, even in the world of outward nature, much less in the troubled sphere of the human heart. Let us evermore ask of Him that He would keep our spirits from

these turbulent disquietudes, or, if we are visited with such, that He would command them to be gone, that He would, as He only can, bid these winds and these waters of our troubled hearts to be still. Let us ask this, for it is only the calm waters that reflect and image in their bosom the heavens that are above; others give back no reflection, or a troubled and distorted one at the best.—*Abp. of Dublin.*

## 2 On the Divine side of things.

### *The Holy Spirit's aid.*

a. The aid of the Holy Spirit in prayer is a living reality.

[15514] The Spirit of God, completing the work of love which Christ stooped to accomplish, humiliates Himself to the level of the imperfect creature, wildly demanding to be served with perfect things; and because man knows not even that first step of holiness, to pray for right things as he ought, the Spirit kneels with him, and shapes for him words of prayer too great for him to understand completely. The Spirit puts a hand to the burden of his infirmity, and eases his weary shoulder of it. Oh, great condescension of God, by which we are taught to know Him! We know Christ condescending to the cross for our sins; now, we must know the Spirit of God, kneeling with us and supplying strange strength to our uplifted hands. He joins in prayers, and in such poor blind prayers; He enters into and dwells in a soul wasted in worldly thoughts and passions.—*Abp. of York.*

b. The aid of the Holy Spirit in prayer is the source and strength of our whole devotional life.

[15515] Our sense of need is from Him. Our religious desires are from Him. Right views of our help and hope are from Him. From Him proceeds that unwearied earnestness which faints not though no answer comes; and from Him proceeds that wrestling strength which makes us mighty to prevail with God. He is the Angel-Jehovah of the closet; its altar watching; its service ordering, shedding on our worthless sacrifices His own pure flame, and guiding the heart's grateful incense straight to heaven. And if we bow meekly in the family, He is there; or if we are in the courts of the Lord's house, He is there. He is the abiding energy of our spiritual and inner life. If sloth creep over the powers of the mind and conscience, it is He that awakes it. If the spirit of bondage revive its depressing influence upon our souls, it is He that comforts us. If despondency cover the heaven of the soul with blackness, at His bidding there is "light at eventide." If the cares of the world turn our devotions into a sea of tumultuous thoughts, the Spirit moves upon the face of the sea, and immediately there is a great calm.—*Rev. Daniel Moore, M.A.*

[15516] The grace of the Holy Spirit is indispensable if we would maintain the life and enjoy the exercise of prayer; but in this, as in every other part of His work, He acts by the

use of means, and in a way that is wisely adapted to the rational and moral nature with which we are endowed. He acts upon us, not as mere machines, but as moral agents; and, by various considerations and motives, He teaches and disposes us to pray. Every part of His work has a tendency to prepare us for this exercise; for whether He act as a reprover, convincing us of sin—or as a sanctifier, subduing our corruptions—or as a comforter, giving us peace and joy in believing—or as a teacher, enlarging our views of Divine truth, and confirming our faith in it—all the operations of His grace are subservient more or less to the exercise of prayer.—*Dr. Buchanan.*

[15517] Prayer is a work of grace, and not of nature. We pray because God, God the Holy Ghost, puts it into our hearts to pray, helps our infirmities, suggests to us what things we ought to pray for, and how. Look at a ship without a wind, becalmed in the middle sea, its sails flapping idly hither and thither; what a difference from the same ship, when the wind has filled its sails, and it is making joyful progress to the haven whither it is bound! The breath of God, that is the wind which must fill the sails of our souls. We must pray in the Spirit, in the Holy Ghost, if we would pray at all.—*W. G. Sims.*

[15518] Prayer is a supernatural work, and therefore the principle of it must be supernatural. He that has nothing of the Spirit of God cannot pray at all; he may howl as a beast in his necessity or distress, or may speak words of prayer, but pray he cannot.—*Abp. Leighton.*

[15519] When Christians pray, God in them speaks to God in heaven. Then prayer is like the moisture of the earth ascending again into the firmament, whence it had lately descended in refreshing rain.—*Abp. of York.*

[15520] Do not forget to ask for "the power to pray." If you say you have received this, yet ask again, for there are powers of prayer far, far beyond what you have now, which will doubtless be given you through the Holy Ghost. Never venture to pray either in your own wisdom or in your own strength. The secret of true prayer is, that it should be *from* God as well as *to* God.—*Rev. P. B. Power, M.A.*

## VI. ITS MEDIUM.

### I Christian prayer is prayer to God through Christ.

[15521] It is prayer to our Father in heaven; yet our prayer does not go to the Father in such sense as if the Son and the Holy Spirit were excluded, as if it dared not apply to them. To the Son also we may and ought to pray, as we ought also to call upon the Holy Spirit; and the Church has ever, yea from its beginning, done both. But though one or the other of the persons is preponderantly present to the consciousness or imagination, it still remains



the three-one God to whom prayer is addressed. But our prayer is ever made *by means* of Christ the Mediator, so that we must say with Augustine : We pray to Him, through Him, in Him. —*Bp. Martensen.*

[15522] Prayer is to be offered to our Father in the name and through the mediation of Christ. Christ is the way to the Father, and the Father's way to us. His name is not a mere musical cadence to a prayer, or a customary close to a collect ; but it is to be the Alpha of our prayer, and its Omega too. He is to be the substance as well as the commencement and end of every prayer : and it is because of what He has done, that we can see a channel by which our prayers shall rise to Deity, and the blessing of Deity shall descend into the heart of humanity.—*Dr. Cumming.*

[15523] All our prayers are but ciphers, till Christ's intercession be added.—*C. Love.*

#### a. Import of praying in the name of Jesus.

[15524] To pray in the name of Christ is to pray in the faith of His name ; we may pray with the name of Christ in our mouths, and yet not pray in His name, unless we pray with the faith of Christ in our hearts (Matt. xxi. 22 ; John xiv. 13).—*Anon.*

[15525] To pray in Christ's name is to pray with a full belief in the new meaning which He gave to prayer by His revelation of the Father, to pray believing that His plan is the holiest and best, and that He knows what we need before we ask, and is always ready to give. Hence we see at once that many prayers do not belong to this class. For instance, men ask for success ; do they mean they cannot forego their desires—that they cannot confront failure ? If so, can they thus pray in the name of Him who renounced Himself, and whose whole career, judged by man's standard of success, was a mighty failure ? Or do they, because they believe God is all-wise, ask to be able to bear success if it be His will it should come, and if not, to be enabled to stand failure ? *that* is to pray in Christ's name. Men ask for happiness : do they mean that they are afraid of sorrow—they cannot bear the cross ? If so, can they pray that prayer in the name of Him who gave up all happiness for man, who endured the cross and the shame, who, because it was the Father's will, bore all sorrow and made it holy ? Or do they mean " enable me to bear happiness or sorrow ?—If it be possible let sorrow pass from me—nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." *That* is to pray in Christ's name. There are, therefore, many supplications which men habitually utter, adding at the close, "through Christ," or "for Christ's sake," but which are at variance with Christ's spirit, and cannot truly be prayers in His name. Marvel not that they gain no reply !—*Rev. E. L. Hull.*

#### 3 The excellence, worth, and efficacy of prayer so offered.

[15526] Prayer comes ever nearer to its perfection in proportion as it becomes a prayer in the name of Jesus. As such our prayer is made partly on the word of Jesus, partly in the power of Jesus ; and on this rests the inwardness of prayer, and likewise its humility, while the praying one relies not on himself, his own power or worthiness, but yields himself entirely to the Mediator, casts himself into His arms, only ventures to appear before God confiding in Him. And as the prayer which is offered at Jesus' word, it will also in particular obey that word of Jesus, that we ought always and without intermission to pray and not to faint (Luke xviii. 1). But as regards the contents, it will be a prayer in the cause of Jesus, the great cause of His kingdom, and for this the Lord's Prayer is and remains the typical prayer. In this prayer our Saviour has taught us that we should not pray as atomistic individuals, not "singly," but as members of human society, of the believing Church, of the kingdom ; by which, however, it is in no way excluded that each of us has his special worth and importance ordained by God Himself.—*Anon.*

[15527] Prayer offered up in the name of Jesus Christ is like Jacob's ladder, in which the soul ascends from earth to heaven.—*J. Arndt.*

#### VII. ITS REGION AND RANGE.

[15528] Primarily, the region of prayer is the region of our own soul, for its salvation from sin, its deliverance from error, its growth to perfection. There no man can be saved without his own will ; no one lost except by his own deliberate choice. Secondly, that region extends to the wider region of humanity. In less degree, but in undoubted fact, we can act upon and through the souls of others. It is God's law that in the education of the individual and of the race, in the proclamation of Christ's saving truth, in the propagation of His grace, man's fellow-working with him shall be an ordained, and, as it seems to us, an essential factor. His will, of course, rules ; we cannot doubt it for a moment. But the rule is that of a gracious King over free subjects, who delight to live and die for Him, not of an iron compulsion over agents fast bound in physical necessity. It is in the spiritual sphere, therefore, especially that the gospel calls both for the work and for the prayer of man. . . . But between those two spheres there is (so to speak) a debatable ground—a region in which even the visible order of things is not known to be ruled by inflexible law—because here the physical realm borders upon the realm of humanity, and because here is the meeting-point of the general providence of God, and His special providence over each individual life. Within that region no man doubts that we should work. Within that region, Christianity undoubtedly bids us pray.—*Bp. Barry.*

[15529] The gospel, dealing with the reality of prayer, emphatically subordinates the action of man, as in work, so also in prayer, to the Divine will. "If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." Of accordance to God's will there are surely two kinds—the accordance of passive submission, with perhaps active obedience following, belongs to that part of the Divine government in which He has made known to us (it matters not how) the existence of fixed laws, expressions of His will, the knowledge of which as fixed is needful for our own action and life. . . . On the other hand, there is a sphere in which God does not simply announce to us His will as fulfilling itself, but accepts and demands the "fellow-working of man."—*Ibid.*

[15530] It has just two limits: the first is—that its range is confined to the promises; but within these, what a bank of wealth, what a mine of mercies, what a store of blessings! The second is—that God will grant or deny our requests as is best for His glory and our good. He makes His answers to correspond with our wants rather than to our wishes.—*Dr. Guthrie.*

[15531] If we have to do with a heavenly Father, our first and main care should be to ask things suitable to His being and His excellency. If children should ask of their parents such a thing as is pleasing to their palate, possibly they might give it them; but when they ask instruction, and desire to be taught, that is far more acceptable to them. When we ask supplies of the outward life, food, raiment, God may give it us; but it is still more pleasing to Him when we ask for grace.—*T. Manton.*

[15532] Is it proper to go to God with secular troubles, and make them subject-matter of prayer? Would you, for instance, encourage men who are in debt to pray that God would help them to means with which to discharge their indebtedness? I would. Any trouble that a man would go to his earthly father about, he may go to his God about. People say, "Do you believe that, contrary to all the great laws of nature and political economy, God will provide a sum of money for a man in answer to his prayer? Do you believe that God contravenes natural laws to assist a man in paying his debts?" I do not. But when a man has used his means to the uttermost, and trusts in God, then God uses His means to control natural laws for that man's benefit. I know that, if I succeed, I must succeed, not by having my father's name, but by putting forth my own exertions. I know that I must make my own way in life, and I undertake to do it. But if I come to a point where I am shut up, held back, so that I cannot go forward, and I do not know what to do, I may go to my father for help. It is not for the sake of throwing off burdens, it is not with the expectation that he will contravene

natural laws, that I go to him. I go to him because I have used up my stock of knowledge of natural laws; and I say to him, "You are older and larger than I am; cannot you use your knowledge of those laws so as to help me?" And he says, "Yes, I can." And he does. And nobody thinks there is anything strange in it. Everybody understands that a father can use his knowledge of natural laws for his child without violating those laws. But when you speak of God's helping men in their secular affairs, people are aghast, and say, "Do you suppose God is going to stop the laws of nature for the sake of enabling men to keep their bank account running?" I understand that God helps men, not by stopping natural laws, but by using them better for us than we can use them for ourselves. And if there is anything justified, it is prayer for help in secular matters by those that love God. And the oftener you go to God for help, the more welcome you are. When a man comes to you for counsel concerning things that are important as affecting his welfare, it not only does not impoverish you to give him the benefit of your knowledge and wisdom, but you are gratified at his consulting you, and you take pleasure in lending yourself to him to that extent. I cannot conceive of a man who, having a store of discreet knowledge, should be unwilling to use it for the succour of his fellow-men. If ducats were as plenty with me as thoughts, I should be most happy to lend to everybody!—*Ward Beecher.*

[15533] When we go to God, we ask Him to do things that please Him. It is more blessed for Him to give to you and to help you than not to do it. And when a man is in trouble, and goes to God, and says, "I have done all I can. I do not know what to do more. I am willing to suffer or to be relieved. Thy will be done,"—I believe that then God hears and answers prayer, even though the trouble be of a secular nature. And I do not believe that in doing it He violates natural laws. I believe, on the contrary, that He controls natural laws, and makes them perform errands of mercy. I should feel almost as though I were an orphan if that doctrine were taken out of the world. I do not believe it will do anybody any hurt to believe that God loves us, that His ear is ever open to our cry, and that, while we use all lawful and known means in our own behalf, He stands ready to succour us in the day of trouble. I would not for anything have my mouth stopped so that I could not go to Him in my extremity, and say, "I am poor and wretched; oh, help, help!"—*Ibid.*

#### VIII. ITS ADVANTAGES AND BLESSINGS.

1 It brings us into a higher and holier region of life.

[15534] Prayer is the act by which man, detaching himself from the embarrassments of sense and nature, ascends to the true level of his destiny.—*Canon Liddon.*

[15535] Sometimes a fog will settle over a vessel's deck and yet leave the topmast clear. Then a sailor goes up aloft and gets a look-out which the helmsman on deck cannot get. So prayer sends the soul aloft; lifts it above the clouds in which our selfishness and egotism befog us, and gives us a chance to see which way to steer.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

[15536] I do not doubt there are many persons who have experienced, that on coming out of their devotions, they feel themselves in a manner new creatures; they seem above the world and all its allurements; they have no sensual desires, nor vanity, nor selfishness, nor resentment, nor ill-will to anybody; no bias to indulgence and indolence, no repining at their condition, fretfulness at accidents befalling them, nor uneasy dread of dangers whereto human nature is liable: but are inspired with the stoical love of rectitude for its own sake, and could almost do and suffer anything for the glory they have had in contemplation before them. And though they find those impressions quickly obscured by the common business of life as soon as they begin to engage in it again, yet will they gather some additional strength upon every renewal, until at length they come to have an influence upon the general tenor of mind and practice, moulding them into the frame wherein solid happiness and usefulness of character consist.—*A. Tucker.*

[15537] Prayer is like a man in a small boat laying hold of a large ship, and who, if he does not move the large vessel, at least moves the small vessel toward the large one; and so, though prayer could not directly move God toward the suppliant, it will move the suppliant toward God, and bring the two parties nearer to each other.—*McCosh.*

[15538] Among the elegant forms of insect life, there is a little creature known to naturalists which can gather round it a sufficiency of atmospheric air, and so clothed upon it descends into the bottom of the pool; and you may see the little diver moving about dry and at his ease, protected by his crystal vesture, though the water all around and above be stagnant and bitter. Prayer is such a protector; a transparent vesture. The world sees it not; but, a real defence, it keeps out the world.—*Dr. J. Hamilton.*

## 2 It is the instrument of [Divine fellowship and Divine training.

[15539] We know those who have been used to kings' courts or educated society from others. By their voice, accent, and language, and not only so, by their gestures and gait, by their usages, by their mode of conducting themselves and their principles of conduct, we know well what a vast difference there is between those who have lived in good society and those who have not. What indeed is called "good society" is often very worthless society. I am not speaking of it to praise it; I only mean that, as the manners which men call refined or courtly are

gained only by intercourse with courts and polished circles, and as the influence of the words there used (that is, of the ideas which those words, striking again and again on the ear, convey to the mind) extends in a most subtle way over all that men do—over the form of their sentences and the tone of their questions and replies, and their general bearing, and the spontaneous flow of their thoughts, and their mode of viewing things, and the general maxims or heads to which they refer them, and the motives which determine them, and their likings and dislikings, hopes and fears, and their relative estimate of persons, and the intensity of their perceptions towards particular objects; so a habit of prayer, the practice of turning to God and the unseen world, in every season, in every place, in every emergency (let alone its supernatural effect of prevailing with God)—prayer, I say, has what may be called a natural effect, in spiritualizing and elevating the soul. A man is no longer what he was before; gradually, imperceptibly to himself, he has imbibed a new set of ideas, and become imbued with fresh principles. He is as one coming from kings' courts, with a grace, a delicacy, a dignity, a propriety, a justness of thought and taste, a clearness and firmness of principle, all his own. Such is the power of God's secret grace acting through those ordinances which He has enjoined us; such the evident fitness of those ordinances to produce the results which they set before us.—*Cardinal Newman.*

## 3 It is an organ of inquiry and a means of acquiring spiritual knowledge.

[15540] Under the Divine method of teaching, prayer, without losing any of its uses of consolation and relief, acquires a new power. It is not only a resource to us in our emotional exigencies, but it is available as an organ of inquiry. Taken into the service of Christ, it becomes a successful means of conducting the search after Divine truth. We learn to seek from God the daily bread for our souls, as well as the daily bread for our bodies. When we throw our minds (as we do in the inductive process) upon objective realities, we cease from trying directly to excite religious emotions: these are left to come and go of themselves. The success of prayer, when so used, becomes evident in the fresh truth we acquire. To possess truth is to possess power, and truth is possessed when we understand it.—*P. Strutt.*

## 4 It imparts to us riches and joy, strength and courage.

[15541] Prayer draws down gifts from heaven. It fills the empty soul. It brings strength to the weak, true riches to the poor, grace to the feeble. It is a bank of wealth, a mine of mercy, a store of blessings. It flies where the eagle never flew. It travels farther and moves faster than the light. Well might Mary, Queen of Scotland, say, "I fear John Knox' prayers more than an army of ten thousand men!"—*Anon*



[15542] Prayer does not directly take away a trial or its pain, any more than a sense of duty directly takes away the danger of infection, but it preserves the strength of the whole spiritual fibre, so that the trial does not pass into the temptation of sin.—*Rev. Stopford Brooke.*

[15543] As it is betwixt friend and friend, the very discourse which they have one with another is pleasing and delightful, though the things which they discourse about may be but ordinary affairs, even so betwixt a Christian and his God. Though the things which sometimes he asks at God's hands, be but common matters, a pertaining to the things of this life, yet the fellowship and holy society which the heart hath with God in the duty is reward enough to him that is exercised and employed in it. Prayer is a kind of ascension of the mind to God, and in that regard very delightful.—*T. Horion, D.D.*

[15544] Lord, what a change within us one short hour,

Spent in Thy presence, will prevail to make ;  
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take ;  
What parched grounds refresh as with a shower !  
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower ;  
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,  
Stands forth, in sunny outline, brave and clear.

We kneel ; how weak ! We rise ; how full of power !

Why therefore should we do ourselves this wrong,

Or others, that we are not always strong ?

That we are ever overborne with care,  
That we should ever weak or heartless be,

Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,  
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee ?—*Robinson.*

[15545] Any heart turned Godward feels more joy

In one short hour of prayer, than e'er was raised

By all the feasts of earth since its foundation.  
—*P. F. Bailey.*

5 It not only preserves but excites the holy flame of Divine love in the soul.

[15546] If there be within us any sparks of Divine love, the best way not only to preserve them, but to excite them, to blow them up into a flame, is by the breath of prayer. O prayer, the converse of the soul with God ; the breath of God in man returning to its original ; the better half of our whole work, and that which makes the other half lively and effectual.—*Gurnal.*

6 It renders our communion with God real and refreshing.

[15547] Prayer is a needful means ; and it is a very profitable one upon the score of its own immediate energy or virtue : for as by familiar converse (together with the delights and advantages attending thereon) other friendships are

begot and nourished, so even by that acquaintance, as it were, with God, which devotion begets, by experience therein how sweet and good He is, this affection is produced and strengthened. As want of intercourse weakens and dissolves friendship ; so if we seldom come at God, or little converse with Him, it is not only a sign, but will be a cause of estrangement and disaffection toward Him : according to the nature of the thing, prayer hath peculiar advantages above other acts of piety, to this effect : therein not only as in contemplation the eye of our mind (our intellectual part) is directed toward God ; but our affections also are drawn out and fixed upon Him ; we not only therein behold His excellences, but in a manner feel them and enjoy them ; our hearts also being thereby softened and warmed by desire become more susceptible of love. We do in the performance of this duty approach nearer to God, and consequently God draws nearer to us (as St. James assures : "Draw near," saith he, "unto God, and He will draw near to you"), and thereby we partake more fully and strongly of His gracious influences.—*I. Barrow, D.D.*

[15548] Religion is the bond between the soul and God, which sin, by virtue of its very nature, breaks up and destroys. It is of importance to inquire whether man can strengthen and intensify that which he can, it seems, so easily ruin if he will. Does his power lie only in the direction of destruction ? Has he no means of invigorating and repairing a tie, in itself so precious, yet in some respects so frail ? The answer lies in our Lord's promise, "Ask, and it shall be given you." Prayer is the act by which man, conscious at once of his weakness and of his immortality, puts himself into real and effective communication with the Almighty, the eternal, the self-existent God.—*Canon Liddon.*

7 It exerts a beneficial influence upon the character.

[15549] It is indeed most delightful to trace the blessed influence which prayer produces upon the character. We must first see how it shines in its own light, and then it is pleasant to observe how its light is reflected from off the heart and temper, which it beautifies and adorns. Prayer, like virtue, should not be courted for its mere indirect consequences ; but, when sought for its own sake, it brings with it a thousand other blessings.—*McCosh.*

[15550] Would you measure in some sort the gains of this communion with God to which we are admitted and invited, consider only what we may gain by communion with good and holy men, and then conclude from this less to the greater. Consider the elevating, ennobling influences which it exercises on the character to live in habitual intercourse with the excellent of the earth, with those whose conversation is in heaven, the tones of whose minds are high and lofty and pure. Almost without being aware of

it, we derive some of their spirit into ourselves ; it is like an atmosphere of health which we unconsciously inhale. But how much more must this be the case, how far mightier the reactive influence for good, when we continually set before us, when we live in fellowship with Him, who is the highest, the purest, and the best, in whom all perfections meet, from whom all true nobleness proceeds ; when thus our fellowship is not with men, who have caught a few glimpses of the glory of God, but with God Himself, from whom all greatness and glory proceed?—*Trench.*

## 8 It ennobles every faculty of the mind.

[15551] How can the whole soul be so nobly or profitably employed as in holding communion with its Maker ? There is no affection of the mind which is not engaged in prayer, except it be the baser and the more depraved ones of our nature. Here is reverential awe stripped of all the baseness of mere fear ; here is hope, not the mere hope of earthly bliss, but of the favour of God, which, when enjoyed, is the fullest bliss. Here is faith, feeling itself firm and immovable in that Being on whom it rests ; and here is love, kindled at the sight of everlasting love. True prayer quickens the soul without agitating it ; as the river is most interesting when there is a ripple upon its surface to show that it is moving ; as the sky is most beautiful when there is enough of breeze to clear away the mists and damps that have been exhaled from the earth, but no storm to disturb its serenity.—*Anon.*

[15552] Prayer, when engaged in, in spirit and in truth, free from pride and the troublings of the passions, contains within itself its own answer, in the heavenly calm and repose which it communicates to the soul. Like every other good act, it is its own reward. When the soul is thus spread out before God, heaven itself seems to descend upon it, as we have seen the firmament reflected upon the bosom of a tranquil lake spread out beneath it. The man who cultivates a devotional spirit is like the earth in its orbit, guided by a central power, and illuminated by a central light, and carrying everywhere a circumambient atmosphere, with a life-giving and refreshing influence.—*Ibid.*

## IX. ITS RELATIONS.

### 1 To religion.

[15553] Religion is no more possible without prayer than poetry without language, or music without atmosphere.—*James Martineau.*

[15554] The most mighty eloquence, and the most devoted diligence, will be utterly inefficient, without the unction is brought down from heaven by frequent and fervent supplication. Prayer, therefore, is one-half of our ministry, and it gives to the other half its power and success.—*Bridges.*

[15555] If faith be the mainspring of religion, devotion winds up the machinery, and keeps it in continual motion ; it is as impossible for the soul to remain strong in faith, and active in obedience, without continued communion with God the fountain of all grace, as it is for a clock to perform its revolutions without being : egularly wound up.—*Bp. Jackson.*

[15556] It is prayer which prevents religion from degenerating into mere speculative thought on the one side, or into mere philanthropy on the other. In prayer the man of action will never become so absorbed in his work as to be indifferent to the truth, which is its original motive. In prayer the man of study and contemplation will never forget that truth is given, not so much that it may interest and stimulate our understandings, as that it may govern and regenerate our life. And thus it is that prayer is of such vital importance to the well-being of the soul. Study may be dispensed with by those who work for God with their hands ; handiwork may be dispensed with by those who seek Him in books and in thought. But prayer is indispensable.—*Anon.*

[15557] Now what a miserable saint is he who is no worshipper of God ! He that casts off the worship of God, in effect casts off God Himself ; he refuses to own Him, or to be conversant with Him as his God. For the way in which men own God, and are conversant with Him as their God, is by worshipping Him.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

[15558] Prayer is to religion what thinking is to philosophy. To pray is to make religion.—*Novalis.*

### 2 To self-denial.

[15559] The lily and rose of prayer and contemplation do not grow and flourish save amid the thorns of self-denial and mortification. We can only approach the "hill of frankincense," which is the symbol of prayer, by means of the "mountain of myrrh," which is mortification. Incense itself, the very type of prayer, does not give forth its perfume until it is burnt, and prayer without self-denial will not rise up to heaven as a sweet odour.—*Bp. Camus.*

### 3 To study, watching, and meditation.

[15560] Prayer without study is presumption, and study without prayer is infidelity.—*I. Watts.*

[15561] Prayer without watching is hypocrisy ; watching without prayer is presumption.—*W. Jay.*

[15562] Prayer is the wing wherewith the soul flies to heaven, and meditation the eye wherewith we see God.—*Ambrose.*

## X. ITS HINDRANCES.

## 1 Worldly companionship and worldly thoughts.

[15563] Let us beware, in our daily walk, of everything that will indispose and unfit us for communion with God. The companions, for instance, from whose presence we shall feel it a kind of contradiction to pass into the presence of God; the worldly thoughts of ambition, of covetousness, of pride, which, if indulged freely and without restraint at other times, will not, even though we bid them, give place at these times; which, if we allow to make commonly a beaten highway of our heart, will not leave that heart at a moment's warning a sanctuary and a temple, but will still keep thronging in, will light like unclean birds, spoiling our sacrifice, and we shall not be able, like Abraham, to fray them away, but shall discover now that it is a small gain to shut the door of our chambers when we cannot shut the door of our hearts; and shall reap in the inability to do so the sad fruits of our own lack of watchfulness in times past, of our unchecked indulgence in such thoughts as should have been restrained and rebuked from the outset.—*Ahp. of Dublin.*

## 2 Distraction and indisposition of mind.

*To be met and counteracted by determined concentration of thought, and persistency of exercise.*

[15564] It was the quaint but excellent saying of an old saint, that a man should deal with distractions in prayer, as he would with dogs who run out and bark at him as he goes along the street—walk on fast and straightforward, and take no notice of them.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[15565] I cannot pray. Then pray till you can. The most constant letter-writer has the most to say.—*Guesses at Truth.*

[15566] We never need prayer so much as when we are indisposed for it.—*R. Cameron.*

## XI. THE NECESSITY OF CULTIVATING ITS REGULAR AND FREQUENT PRACTICE.

## 1 Reasons for the necessity.

(1) *In order to maintain friendship with God.*

[15567] As familiar conversation (wherein men do express their minds and affections mutually) breedeth acquaintance, and cherisheth good-will of men to one another; but long forbearance thereof dissolveth or slackeneth the bonds of amity, breaking their intimacy, and cooling their kindness; so is it in respect to God; it is frequent converse with Him which begetteth a particular acquaintance with Him, a mindful regard of Him, a hearty liking to Him, a delightful taste of His goodness, and consequently a sincere and solid good-will toward Him; but intermission thereof produceth estrangement or enmity toward Him. If we seldom come at God, we shall little know Him,

not much care for Him, scarce remember Him, rest insensible of His love and regardless of His favour; a coldness, a shyness, a distaste, an antipathy toward Him will by degrees creep upon us. Abstinence from His company and presence will cast us into conversations destructive or prejudicial to our friendship with Him; wherein soon we shall contract familiarity and friendship with His enemies (the world and the flesh), which are inconsistent with love to Him, which will dispose us to forget Him, or to dislike and loathe Him.—*I. Barrow, D.D.*

[15568] The cultivation of the gift of prayer dare not, any more than the gift of meditative contemplation, be left to accident, to become a mere affair of moods (of inclination or disinclination); for in that case prayer would far too often be omitted. It must become a problem to every Christian to educate himself for prayer, by subjecting prayer to a rule, a discipline. In the life of a Christian there must be an order of prayer, appointed times of prayer; and it is a natural requirement that no day pass over without morning and evening sacrifice. True, it may be said that the praying frame must be given us; wherefore we must continue watchful, even amid the occupations and distractions of life, for the visitations of the Spirit and His calling voices. For the Spirit visits us far oftener, speaks far oftener within us, than we ourselves are aware of, because we do not give heed to it.—*Bp. Martensen.*

(2) *In order to maintain our spiritual strength and successfully resist temptation.*

[15569] When you have given over the practice of stated prayer, you gradually become weaker without knowing it. Samson did not know he had lost his strength till the Philistines came upon him; you will think yourselves the men you used to be, till suddenly your adversary will come furiously upon you, and you will as suddenly fall.—*Cardinal Newman.*

[15570] Prayers are the bulwarks of piety and good conscience, the which ought to be placed so as to flank and relieve one another, together with the interjacent spaces of our life; that the enemy (the sin which doth so easily beset us) may not come in between, or at any time assault us, without a force sufficiently near to reach and repel him.—*I. Barrow, D.D.*

(3) *In order to sanctify work, and inspire to the fulfilment of duty, and exercise of true obedience.*

[15571] "*Ora et labora*," writes Dr. Wichern, in one of his pleasant papers, "is carved on a peasant's house in the Vierland. 'It must be French,' said a neighbour's wife, as I stood looking at the legend; 'but you know it just means—

'With this hand work, and with the other pray, And God will bless them both from day to day.'"

*Ora et labora* is the legend of the Christian's faith, and the plan of his life. His fervent prayer



begets honest, manly, unshrinking work; his work, as it is faithful, and it is faithful in proportion as he realizes it is for God, throws him back upon prayer. It is true that this connection is regarded with some suspicion. It is associated with the failure, and worse, of monastic life. *Ora et labora* was the monkish watchword with which men went into the wilderness, and builded up their lonely cells, and toiled at their simple gardens, and knelt in solemn thought of the world behind them, through long fastings and wakeful nights. But on their lips it was a profound mistake. They had cut themselves off from brotherly sympathies and social duties, from the entire sphere of Christian work. They had thrown themselves upon the selfishness of lonely hours and solitary thoughts. Their *ora*, earnest and well-meant at first, became mechanical and unreal; their *labora* was a fiction. They had no right to their motto. And remembering the hollowness and hypocrisy to which their system brought them, its utter worthlessness, its world-wide scandal, men have shrunk with fear from the truth they misused.—*Stevenson*.

[15572] Those who by practice or speech arrogate to prayer the time and place of ordinary duties are in error. Divorced from the common charities of life, prayer must become mechanical and untrue. If it be used to set some apart, on some sacred and haughty height above the rest and the ordinary obligations of society, if it only make them more rigid censors of others, while they themselves are less kindly, less helpful, less useful, who can wonder that the world revolts, or that the more thoughtful and reverent minds are carried to the other extreme, and boldly say that work is prayer? Work is no more prayer than prayer is work, although the looseness of the expression is often forgiven for the deeper truth of the thought. Work is no more prayer than a walk in the fields is religious worship. To the devout man both are devout; to the undevout man they are nothing. Nay, work without prayer is as dangerous, ay, and more, than prayer without work. It is the practical ignoring of God, of a spiritual world and spiritual laws. It is the start downwards to the grossest and most superstitious materialism. It is a clear peril of our present time. We do not want to be reminded of the need and dignity and sacredness of work; the whole century is preaching that; but we do want to be taught the need and sacredness of prayer, and that it is a force, of which though the world knows nothing, yet it establishes greater than the world's works.—*Ibid.*

[15573] When we pray for any virtue, we should cultivate the virtue as well as pray for it; the form of your prayer should be the rule of your life; every petition to God is a precept to man. Look not, therefore, upon your prayers as a short method of duty; by what we require of God we see what He requires of us.—*Bp. Taylor*.

[15574] In prayer the profoundest act of conscience and obedience is inwardly accomplished, for prayer is only in so far a laying hold and appropriation of God, as it is likewise a *sacrifice*; and we can only receive God into us, when we likewise give ourselves to Him. He who offers no sacrifice in his prayer, who does not sacrifice his self-will, does not really pray. But this sacrifice of surrender and obedience is only true and pure when it is the sacrifice of free love, when under it the position of the servant is transformed into that of the child. But such a sacrifice, in which self-will dies, room is gained within for God the Lord, whose place within us is otherwise occupied by the selfish desires, the world and its images. But no one is at the very first perfect in prayer. Prayer can only have in us a really developed history, by continued resistance to all that opposes prayer, and by continued education of the gift of prayer bestowed on us. For in this also that word holds good, "To him that hath shall be given" (Matt. xxv. 29).—*Bp. Martensen*.

(4) *In order to render the habit of prayer easy.*

[15575] Prayer, like faith, is a thing perfectly simple in idea, but exceedingly difficult of execution.—*Dean Goulburn*.

[15576] When a pump is frequently used, the water pours out at the first stroke because it is high; but if the pump has not been used for a long time, the water gets low, and when you want it you must pump a long while; and the water comes only after great efforts. It is so with prayer; if we are instant in prayer, every little circumstance awakens the disposition to pray, and desire and words are always ready; but if we neglect prayer, it is difficult for us to pray, for the water in the well gets low.—*Felix Neff*.

## 2 Illustrations of the duty.

[15577] Prayer is to be regarded not only as a distinct exercise of religion, for which its own time must be set apart, but as a process woven into the texture of the Christian's mind, and extending through the length and breadth of his life. Like the golden thread in a tissue, it frequently disappears beneath the common thread. It disappears, and is hidden from the eye; yet, nevertheless, it is substantially there, like a stream running under ground for a certain period of its course. Suddenly the thread emerges into sight again on the upper surface of the tissue, and suddenly again disappears; and thus it penetrates the whole texture, although occasionally hidden. This is a very just illustration of the matter in hand. Look from without upon a Christian's life, and you will see divers occupations and employments, many of which, it may be, call for the exercise of his mind. But beneath the mind's surface there is an undercurrent, a golden thread of prayer, always there, though often latent, and frequently comes up to view not only in stated

acts of worship, but in holy ejaculations.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[15578] In the precept, to pray *always*, there is nothing of exaggeration, nothing commanded which may not be fulfilled, when we understand of prayer as the continual desire of the soul after God; having, indeed, its times of intensity, seasons of an intenser concentration of the spiritual life, but not being confined to those times; since the whole life of the faithful should be, in Origen's beautiful words, one great connected prayer—or, as St. Basil expresses it, prayer should be the salt, which is to salt everything besides. "That soul," says Donne, "that is accustomed to direct herself to God upon every occasion; that, as a flower at sunrise, conceives a sense of God in every beam of His, and spreads and dilates itself towards Him, in a thankfulness, in every small blessing that He sheds upon her—that soul who, whatsoever string be stricken in her, bass or treble, her high or her low estate, is ever turned towards God—that soul prays sometimes when it does not know that it prays."—*Abp. Trench.*

## XII. THE SIN AND FOLLY OF GRUDGING TIME SPENT IN THIS HOLY EXERCISE.

[15579] We may be tempted, probably we all have been at times, to grudge the necessary time. It has seemed to us too much to give, and this especially under the stress of some urgent business, or in seasons when we are devoted and rightly so to some engrossing studies. And yet, if we would realize this, that God is the fountain of all wisdom and of all knowledge—the Author of all order in our thoughts, of all discipline in our affections—if only we would keep in mind how there is nothing that breaks down the powers even of the intellect so surely as sensual sin, nothing which narrows its capacities so effectually as a permitted worldliness, we should count that time well bestowed which consecrates all our other times, which is spent in seeking that grace which is to keep us pure in our affections, and to keep us free in our minds. We should not then be tempted to diminish these the firstfruits of our time, or to look at them with a grudging eye.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[15580] It is related of a hero in Scottish history, that, when an overwhelming force was in full pursuit, and all his followers were urging him to more rapid flight, he coolly dismounted, in order to repair a flaw in his horse's harness. Whilst busied with the broken buckle, the distant cloud swept down in nearer thunder, but just as the prancing hoofs and eager spears were ready to dash down on him, the flaw was mended, the clasp was fastened, the steed was mounted, and, like a sweeping falcon, he vanished from their view. The broken buckle would have left him in the field an inglorious prisoner, the timely delay sent him in

safety to his huzzaing comrades. There is in daily life the same luckless precipitancy, and the same profitable delay. The man who, from his prayerless waking, bounces off into the business of the day, however good his talents and great his diligence, is only galloping on a steed harnessed with a broken buckle, and must not be astonished if, in his hottest haste, his most hazardous leap, he be left inglorious in the dust.—*Hamilton.*

## XIII. MISTAKES RESPECTING ITS CHARACTER.

[15581] (1) Putting prayer in the place of faith. People often say—"I do pray all I can"—an assertion always untrue, and worse. We are saved by faith, and not by prayer. (2) Confounding the act of prayer with the spirit of prayer. "Have you said your prayers?" Perhaps so; and yet not, as is said of Elias (James v. 17, marg.), he "prayed in his prayer." (3) Looking at the emotion of fervour and elevation as the chief test of prayer. Many think they have not prayed rightly, unless they have felt much enlargement of heart and freedom of utterance. But often confession is the better part of prayer; "groanings which cannot be uttered" are the truest eloquence (Psa. li. 17; Rom. viii. 27).—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

## XIV. EXAMPLES OF MECHANICAL PRAYER.

[15582] The Thibetan puts his written prayers in a cylinder, which revolves on a handle, and which he twirls by the aid of a ball and chain, each revolution of the instrument counting for an offering of the enclosed petition. Sometimes he encloses these in a great drum or cylinder, which he attaches to running water as he constructs his rude flour-mills, thus "praying without ceasing" by water-power; or, in other instances, constructs great prayer windmills. In Burmah, the Buddhist punches his prayers in long, pennant-like slips of gilt paper, which he ties to a slight bamboo stick and waves before his idol-god, each oscillation being a repetition of the prayer, of which he keeps count by a rosary numbering one hundred and eight balls. In Timbuctoo (Africa), the priest, or wizard, or medicine-man, writes prayers on a piece of board, washes it off, and catching the water in a calabash, gives sick people to drink of it for their recovery, or sells it that it may be sprinkled over objects to improve or protect them. Mohammedans wear Koran prayers about their persons as amulets or charms, though some of the African Mohammedans think they are ineffectual against firearms, which have been invented since Mohammed's day. Ward saw a Mohammedan woman dropping slips of paper on which prayers were written into a river, to obtain from the river-goddess immunity from sickness. In China, the Taoist, in case of sickness, after performance of certain ceremonies, writes a statement of the fact and a prayer for

assistance on a piece of paper, which is burned by the officiating priest, who determines whether it will be answered favourably. And in another process, a message is "sent to heaven" by writing it on paper and performing a ceremony, which enables the soul of the petitioner to leave the body, and "carry the message to heaven and bring back an answer." In India, Mohammedans sometimes pray by proxy, wealthy persons hiring a sufficient number of men to alternate and ceaselessly read Koran prayers in the Imānebārā in their stead, the merit accruing to the employer. The Mohammedan also uses a rosary, as does the Hindu ascetic. That of the Mohammedan contains thirty-three beads, that being the number of the times which certain parts of his formula, such as "God is most great : there is no God but He," &c., must be repeated.—*Gracey.*

#### XV. OBJECTIONS RAISED AGAINST PRAYER AS REGARDS BOTH THEORY AND PRACTICE.

- 1 If God's will is to give, why ask Him at all? Why pray at all, if God already knows our necessities, and is able and willing to supply them?

[15583] It is a hackneyed objection to the use of prayer, that it is offending the omniscience of God to suppose He requires information of our wants. But no objection can be more futile. We do not pray to inform God of our wants, but to express our sense of the wants which He already knows. As He has not so much made His promises to our necessities as to our requests, it is reasonable that our requests should be made before we can hope that our necessities will be relieved. God does not promise to those who want that they shall "have," but to those who "ask;" nor to those who need that they shall "find," but to those who "seek." So far, therefore, from His previous knowledge of our wants being a ground of objection to prayer, it is, in fact, a true ground for our application. Were He not Knowledge itself, our information would be of as little use; as our application would be, were He not Goodness itself.—*Hannah More.*

[15584] Granted that God can, and even may, change His apparent course of dealing with men, why should it be necessary for them to tell Him their wants, seeing that He knows them already, and is just and loving enough to fulfil such as are commendable or reasonable? The answer is that prayer is not for God's instruction, but for ours. It is to teach us dependence on Him, not to inform Him of anything whereof He may be presumed ignorant. And besides, this objection is only the *à priori* fallacy again. If we base our belief in God's omniscience on Holy Writ, then that revelation declares as fully His requirement of prayer as it does anything else concerning Him; if we base it merely on our own conceptions of what suits the character of God, then we find our-

selves faced by the necessity of also attributing direct sympathy with us to Him, and sympathy without intercourse is a delusion.—*R. F. Little-dale.*

[15585] The longer I live, the more certain I am that the only reason for praying at all is because God is our Father; the more certain I am that we shall never have any heart to pray unless we believe that God is our Father. . . . People will say to themselves, "If God is evil, He will not care to have mercy on me; and if He is good, there is no use wearying Him by asking Him what He has already intended to give me: why should I pray at all?" The only answer is, "Pray because God is your Father, and you His child." The only answer, but the most complete answer. I will engage to say, that if any one is ever troubled with doubts about prayer, these two simple words, "Our Father," if he can once really believe them in their full richness and depth, will make the doubts vanish in a moment, and prayer seem the most natural and reasonable of all acts. It is because we are God's children, not merely His creatures, that He will have us pray. Because He is educating us to know Him; to know Him, not merely to be an Almighty Power, but a living, loving Person; not merely an irresistible Fate, but a Father who delights in the love of His children, who wishes to shape them into His own likeness, and make them fellow-workers with Him; therefore it is that He will have us pray. Doubtless He *could* have given us everything without our asking; for He *does* already give us almost everything without our asking. But He wishes to educate us as His children; to make us trust in Him; to make us love Him; to make us work for Him of our own free wills, in the great battle which He is carrying on against evil; and that He can only do by teaching us to pray to Him. I say it reverently, but firmly. As far as we can see, God cannot educate us to know Him, the living, willing, loving Father, unless He teaches us to open our hearts to Him, and to ask Him freely for what we want, just *because* He knows what we want already.—*Rev. C. Kingsley.*

- 2 We are told that prayer is an idle superfluity, it is an impertinent intrusion; for it is an attempt to bend the will of God to our will, to make Him swerve from the course which His perfect wisdom prescribes, and suit His actions to our private inclinations.

[15586] Let the objector prove to us that we ought to dismiss every thought which portrays God as gracious, sympathizing, caring for us, and loving us; and that for the Father in heaven, to whom we have been accustomed to look up, we ought to substitute some incomprehensible Abstraction dwelling in imperturbable serenity, without affection or emotion, unmoved alike by the clang of the whirling universe and the cries of the souls who seek His face; and then indeed we shall be chilled back into silence, and prayer



will die away on our lips. Such an idea of God, however, has never yet been accepted by the heart of man; it may suit philosophical speculation, but every religion repudiates it, and most of all the religion of Christ, in whom God is especially manifested as the Father. The noblest elements in human nature have always supplied the materials wherewith to fashion our mental images of God; and so far from man being at the highest when most lifted above the possibility of emotion, the universal verdict pronounces a feeling, sympathizing, compassionate heart to be essential to his moral excellence. Who ever drew the ideal portrait of a father, and pictured him destitute of tenderness for his children, or of delight in their confidences, or of desire that they should freely pour out their hearts to him?—*B. Mailland.*

[15587] A strange family it would be where the parent's knowledge put a fetter on the children's tongues, and thrust back their trusting confidences into a cold, cheerless silence! Prayer is the communion of the child on earth with the Father in heaven, the unbosoming of the soul's wants and sorrows and joys into the sympathizing ear of God, who invites its frankest trust, and would have it tell all to Him, although He sees it through and through, and is acquainted with every pang that wrings it, and every emotion that thrills its depths.—*Ibid.*

3 We are told that prayer is impotent: it seeks the unattainable; it demands a result which is opposed to the whole order and course of the universe.

[15588] This objection, which in terms seems limited to prayers for temporal blessings, really extends also to prayers for spiritual benefits. For in the latter case, as much as in the former, we ask God to interfere and change in our favour the ordinary sequence of events. There is a mental order as well as a physical; there are moral laws as well as laws of nature. If we ask God to remove a disease, to ward off a pestilence, or to cause a famine to cease, we pray for His interference with the physical order; if we ask Him to deliver us from a sinful habit, or to make us strong for duty, we pray for His interference with the mental or moral order. Hence, if the true conception of order and law is adverse to prayer at all, it must condemn prayer for spiritual as well as for temporal blessings.—*Ibid.*

[15589] (1) Apart from any suspension or infraction of law, God may answer many of our prayers by the influence He exerts on our own wills. (2) If God may answer many of our prayers by influencing our own wills, He may answer many more by influencing the wills of our neighbours. (3) Even in the province of physical sequences, in the region which is confessedly under the reign of law, there may be answers to prayer which yet are not miraculous. (4) We may reasonably contend still further, that occasions may arise when, for the greater

good of His suppliant creatures, God will even work miracles in answer to prayer.—*Anon.*

[15590] The fact of the universality of law is a modern discovery. It is not many years since men believed that rain and cloud, storm and calm, harvest and famine, sickness and health, earthquake and volcano, and all the changes which they beheld in nature, were either uncased or were the result of the varying moods of the gods, or of God, by whose interference they were produced. But modern science has resolved every seemingly fitful change to the action of most uniform laws. Now, if the Christian doctrine of prayer involved the belief that these laws of nature must be violated every time that God answers prayer, we should not blame the scientist for rejecting prayer in the name of science. But the doctrine of answer to prayer involves no such position. The Christian claim is that God can, when He sees fit, answer his prayers without violating the laws of nature. He claims, simply, that God can do what men can with nature's laws. Men are every day modifying the phenomena of nature, by adjusting the laws of nature one to another, or one against another, and so bringing to pass results which Nature would not have produced, and yet violating none of her laws. So the physician does, when he introduces a new medicine into the system of the sick man, and cures him. So the engineer does when he reverses steam in his locomotive, or puts on the air brakes, and saves a train full of people from death. The sparks from a hunter's fire may set fire to a prairie, and change the condition of the atmosphere to bring on a rain. And if men can interfere with Nature's operations in accordance with law, and so bring about results which would not otherwise have taken place, cannot God do as much? He who holds the reins, shall not He guide the steeds? Has not He knowledge and command of the laws of nature, which enables Him to do definitely more for His children who cry unto Him, than men can do for their children? Or does He not pity His children even as an earthly father? There is, then, nothing in the uniformity of natural laws to forbid the belief that God may answer prayer.—*Rev. Dr. Sprecher.*

4 We are told that prayer is proved by experience to be a vain superstition; for, as a matter of observable and registered fact, it is not found to have any results, or to make any difference in the course of events.

[15591] If we take from man the craving for worship, and throw him back on himself alone for his ideal, all history tells us that brute force and material prosperity become the only recognized good. Therefore it is part of God's moral education of man to keep the craving alive, to lead men onwards by setting before them the loftiest conceivable standard, to soften hardness and to abase pride, by teaching man that the All-Holy is also the All-Merciful, that the Most

[15591-15595]

High is also the most lowly, in that He rejects no suitor, and scorns no intercourse. But there is only one way to prevent the craving from wearing itself out, and that is by satisfying it, at least occasionally. If it be conceded—as it must on any Theistic hypothesis—that God has implanted the longing in us, then it follows as a necessary consequence of His nature that He will not cheat His petitioners. If the experience of mankind were that He neither heard nor answered prayer, there is small probability that its prevalence would still be well-nigh universal. On the contrary, the whole induction is immeasurably the other way, and asserts that God always does hear, and always does answer devout and trustful prayer, albeit He may not always grant the special petition of any given worshipper. Here is another case in which unscientific prejudice has barred honest investigation. It is the plainest duty of any man who undertakes to demonstrate the inefficacy of prayer to inquire into the results ascribed to devout intercession by all sincere Christians.—*R. F. Littledale.*

[15592] To show this an appeal is made to statistics. In Christian States, for instance, there are no persons so continuously and generally prayed for as monarchs, both that they may live long, and be endued with true religion and virtue; yet it has never appeared that their lives are prolonged beyond the average, or are conspicuous for any moral superiority. Again, the children of religious parents enjoy the privilege of being prayed for more than the children of the worldly and unbelieving; yet they are not found to be more free from the sicknesses and accidents of childhood, or to be longer lived or more prosperous. Pious soldiers enjoy no exemption from the casualties of battle; praying farmers are not observed to have finer weather or heavier crops, nor devout merchants better markets, than their prayerless neighbours. Missionary ships are probably waited on their voyages of mercy with more prayers than others, yet they show as large a percentage of wrecks. In fact, adds the objector, with a last thrust at the practice of prayer, Christians themselves, however they may keep up the form of praying, practically evince their disbelief in its efficacy as far as temporal matters are concerned, by their adoption of the sentiment, that adversity, not prosperity, is the blessing of Christianity. For the sincere Christian, who has drunk into his Master's spirit, it is difficult to treat such an argument as this with seriousness; for him prayer is too spiritual a thing to have its efficacy submitted to mechanical or numerical tests. Trusting, affectionate children are not accustomed to keep a register of their parent's dealings with them, and test his love by its figures. Souls that have learnt to concentrate all their desires in the cry, "Thy will be done!" and to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job i. 21), cannot be measuring their Father's faithfulness and love by the

number of times that some wish of theirs has been granted. In truth, the petitions to which alone the statistical test could in any way be applicable, form a very small proportion of Christian prayer, and are precisely that part of it which is the least definite, and urged with the least insistence. Those who pray in the spirit, after the example of Christ, sweep the whole scale of the soul's wants, and besiege with their supplications the treasury of God's inexhaustible grace; but when it is for some bodily mercy or temporal succour that they ask, their tone sinks into humble diffidence, and they suggest rather than entreat, scarcely desirous of framing a definite wish, and earnest only to leave the matter with implicit confidence to the Divine wisdom. How shall the tabulated results of the arithmetician gauge the efficacy of such prayers as these, or distinguish from them the formal, selfish, untrustful prayers, to which no blessing is promised?—*B. Maitland.*

5 It has been suggested by some thinkers, such as Schleiermacher, that the effect of prayer is purely subjective, and that its only result is to produce a feeling of dependence and humility in the suppliant.

[15593] It is true that prayer does exercise a subjective influence, and this is doubtless *part* of the work which it is intended to do; but it is not *all*. Why should God encourage us to pray for our daily bread if it is not to be given in answer to our prayers? Does not He that gives spiritual things give temporal things also? Is not *everything* sanctified by the Word of God and by prayer? But an unanswerable objection to Schleiermacher's theory may be drawn from the fact that *intercessory* prayer for the bodily and spiritual welfare of others is urged most strongly by example and precept in the Old and New Testaments. It would be the merest mockery to pretend to pray for others if the only effect was to be in ourselves. It is dishonouring God to suppose Him capable of conniving at this mockery by the exhortation of His holy Word. A man of prayer has his faith strengthened by his prayers. Why? Because he sees that they have been answered. He becomes more humbled. Why? Because he sees that though God is so high, He humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth, and hears the cry of all that call upon Him faithfully.—*Rev. R. B. Girdlestone.*

[15594] In a word, the practice of prayer will furnish ready answers to all objections against the theory of prayer.—*Ibid.*

#### XVI. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRAYER AND WORSHIP.

[15595] It is true that prayer is the turning of the soul to God, but it turns to Him that it may obtain something from Him. It looks to God, but it does not seem to stay fixed upon Him, but comes back upon itself with the answers to its petitions. And so prayer is described by our Lord as "asking that we may receive, seeking

that we may find, knocking that it may be opened to us." The two great words of prayer are Give and Forgive. And therefore prayer being that part of religious service which chiefly and primarily takes the side of self, being one of the self-regarding states, is not exactly what we mean by worship.—*Rev. W. Page-Roberts.*

[15596] Prayer looks to God that it may get something from Him; worship looks to Him, and is entranced and fascinated and spell-bound by what He is in Himself. . . . There are still Christian people to whom God is scarcely ever the object of pure selfless worship. They are too terrified to do anything but cower before the watching eyes and retributive justice of the Omnipotent. They can weep and cry and pour forth ceaseless litanies, but as for being still and dwelling upon God until earthly pains and sorrows and sins fall off from the entranced mind, and all is tranquil as a dreamless sleep, they know not what it means. And yet this is the highest form of religious service; seen with such lofty pathos in the worship of our Lord and Master; presented to us as the absorbing occupation of heaven, where prayer is needless and faith is lost in sight. . . . In the "Excursion" Wordsworth nobly expresses of his Wanderer what I am feebly trying to reach. He says:

"In such access of mind, in such high hour  
Of visitation from the living God,  
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.  
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no  
request,  
Wrapt into still communion that transcends  
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise."

—*Ibid.*

## XVII. ENCOURAGEMENT FOR DESPONDING SUPPLIANTS.

[15597] Nothing being hidden from God, He can inspire us with desires appropriate to our exigencies, spiritual and temporal, and grant "those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul." He can perceive if, by His grace, we sincerely long to learn and do His will, and bestow on us the indispensable light and power. Petitioning an earthly monarch, we might find our choicest and truest words misunderstood. It is impossible for our heavenly Father to misinterpret His children's petitions, however ill expressed.—*Robinson.*

[15598] As a father is more delighted with the stammering and stuttering, as it were, with the inarticulate and imperfect talk of his own little child when it first begins to speak, than with the exactest eloquence of the most famous orator upon earth; so assuredly our heavenly Father is infinitely better pleased with the broken, interrupted passages and periods of prayer in an upright heart, heartily grieved, that he can do no better, nor offer up a more lively, hearty, and orderly sacrifice, than with the excellently-composed, fine-phrased, and most

methodical petitions of the learnedest Pharisee.—*R. Bolton.*

[15599] There is no such thing in the long history of God's kingdom as an unanswered prayer.—*Macleod.*

[See Vol. I., Section I., Division F, p. 256.]

## HUMILITY.

### I. ITS HISTORY AS A GRACE PECULIARLY CHRISTIAN.

[15600] Humbleness is peculiar to Christianity. Goodness is admired and taught in all religions. But to be good, and feel that your good is nothing; to advance, and become more conscious of pollution; to ripen in all excellence, and like corn to bend the head when full of ripe bursting grain—that is Christianity.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

[15601] The whole Roman language, even with all the improvements of the Augustan age, does not afford so much as a name for humility—the word whence we borrow this, as is well known, bearing in Latin quite a different meaning; no, nor was one found in all the copious language of the Greeks, till it was made by the great Apostle.—*J. Wesley.*

[15602] It was a plant little known among the ancients, and first grew to perfection, violet-like, in the retired and shady hills of Judæa.—*Acton.*

[15603] Humility, in the gospel sense of the word, is a virtue with which the ancients, and more particularly the Romans, were totally unacquainted. They had not even a word in their language to describe it by. The only word that seems to express it, *humilitas*, signifies baseness, servility, and meanness of spirit—a thing very different from true Christian humility; and indeed this was the only idea they entertained of that virtue. Everything that we call meek and humble, they considered as mean and contemptible. A haughty, imperious, overbearing temper, a high opinion of their own virtue and wisdom, a contempt of all other nations but their own, a quick sense and a keen resentment, not only of injuries, but even of the slightest affronts—this was the favourite and predominant character among the Romans; and that gentleness of disposition, that low estimation of our own merits, that ready preference of others to ourselves, that fearfulness of giving offence, that abasement of ourselves in the sight of God which we call humility, they considered as the mark of a tame, abject, and unmanly mind.—*Bp. Porteus.*

### II. ITS NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE.

[15604] Humility is a sense of our absolute nothingness in the view of infinite greatness and



excellence; but sense of inferiority which result from the comparison of men with each other is often an unwelcome sentiment forced upon the mind, which may rather embitter the temper than soften it; that which devotion impresses is soothing and delightful.—*Rev. R. Hall.*

[15605] A humble man is one who, thinking of himself neither more highly nor more lowly than he ought to think, passes a true judgment on his own character. There is no genuine self-abasement apart from a lofty conception of our own destiny, powers, and responsibilities; and one of the most excellent of human virtues is but poorly expressed by an abject carriage. Torpid passions, a languid temperament, and a feeble nature, may easily produce that false imitation of humility which, however, in its genuine state, will ever impart elevation to the soul and dignity to the demeanour.—*Jugne*

### III. ITS INDISPENSABLENESS TO THE TRUE LIFE OF THE SOUL.

[15606] There are graces which may be given or withheld; there are experiences, assurances, raptures, ecstasies. These are the accomplishments, rather than the needs of the Christian. But no man ever went to heaven without learning humility on this side of the grave. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Without humility, that is, without the victory of truth in the conscience, no soul ever really turned to God.—*Canon Liddon.*

[15607] Without humility, religious progress is impossible. Pride is the destruction of the principle of progress; it whispers to us continually that we are already all that could be desired; or it points our attention to high positions and ambitious efforts, beyond the scope of other men. Now the true growth of the soul is not to be measured by our attempting many or extraordinary duties, but by our power of doing simple duties well; and humility, when it reigns in the soul, carries this principle into practice. It bids us who work with our brains to hallow our work, especially whatever may be to us hard or distasteful work, by doing it as a matter of principle. It guides our religious thoughts to a deeper mastery of the central truths of faith rather than to the study of those intricate problems which lie on the outskirts of theology. It counsels us, when on our knees, to use simple prayers. We do well to retain the very prayers which we used as children, however we may add to them; and to throw our whole soul into each separate clause and word. It enriches common acts of neighbourly and social kindness with that intensity of moral effort which is due to every act, the deepest moving power of which is the love of God.—*Ibid.*

### IV. ITS SOCIAL FOES.

[15608] It may be thought that the social foes of humility are less powerful now than in bygone

years, that good taste on this side, and the strong and strengthening current of political democracy on that, have in this matter already done, or bid fair to do, the proper work of the gospel. But this is to forget that the essence of all true moral excellence lies not in external conformity to a conventional standard, but in an inward disposition under the control of recognized principle. The formulas of good taste are merely an elegant translation of the common opinion of contemporary society. The humility of good taste is strictly an affair of appropriate phrases, gestures, reserves, withdrawals; it is the result of a socially enforced conformity to an outward law. The humility of democratic feeling is often a very vigorous form of pride, which is scarcely at pains to disguise its real character. The demand for an impossible social equality, which has done so much to discredit some of the noblest aspirations for liberty that the modern world has known, is due to the temper which creates a tyranny, only working under circumstances which, for the moment, forbid it. The impatience of an equal in the one case is the impatience of a superior in the other. The humility of a democracy is largely concerned with enforcing an outward conformity to this virtue on the part of other people; and both it and the humility of good taste may remind us of those cannibals who have walked in our parks clothed in the dress and affecting the manners of European civilization, and yet have found it difficult to restrain themselves from indulging old habits when there has been much to tempt them. Humility, to be genuine, must be based on principle; and that principle is suggested by the apostle's question, which warns every human being that, be his wealth, his titles, his position, his name among men, what they may, they afford no real ground for self-exaltation, because they are external to his real self, and are in fact bestowed on him from above.—*Ibid.*

### V. CONSIDERATION OF THE OBJECTIONS RAISED AGAINST ITS EXERCISE BY INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL PRIDE.

[15609] Humility is the ally of intellect instead of its enemy, because humility is both a moral instinct which seeks truth, and a moral instrument for reaching truth. Humility leads us to base our knowledge on truth; it also leads us truthfully to recognize the real measure of our capacity. Why has Aristotle, with his comparatively materialistic mind, been on the whole so much higher an authority in the schools of Christendom than the more spiritual Plato? Because Aristotle more humbly and truthfully confines himself to the discussion of questions which can really be discussed without the aid of a supernatural revelation. Why is the intellectual progress of Christian countries so superior to that of any known pagan civilization? Because the Incarnate Christ has popularized, even to a certain degree among those who reject Him, a virtue which is essential to the highest intellectual

development. Why did such princes of intellect as Pascal and Leibnitz bend in such true faith and worship before the feet of the Crucified? Because that very virtue which had taught them to base their knowledge on truth, had also taught them the limits of created intellect, and had pointed to a sphere in which the highest reason employs its energies in bringing every thought to the obedience of Christ. Submission of the intellect is only folly if God has never spoken, and if on the highest subjects that can interest mankind, we possess nothing more trustworthy than a human speculation.—*Ibid.*

[15610] No evidence, however strong, would suffice to recommend religion where it is discredited beforehand by a theory which proscribed the truthful instinct of humility. Gibbon speaks of the "incurable suspicion" which protects the mind of "an infidel" against undisputed and unwelcome facts; but this suspicion can hardly aid the infidel's real intellectual growth. And it is no paradox to say that a believing Christian, recognizing the facts which invite or compel belief in revelation, so far from forfeiting mental strength by doing so, is intellectually stronger than a sceptic, who determines to ignore their reality or at least their significance. The Christian's humility is in reality the cause of his mental energy.—*Ibid.*

[15611] Humility is not a *μικροψυχία*. On the contrary, the true Christian is the genuine *μεγαλόψυχος*; he is pre-eminently the man of large soul and noble instincts. Humility is not a want of enterprise, a subtle resource of idleness. The man in the parable with one talent was not a humble man: the apostle was humble who yet cried, "I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Humility is not a lack of courage: it is not the poverty of spirit which shrinks from encounter. It is not an abandonment of inalienable responsibilities; to God alone we must make account for what we believe and do. Still less is it a false, artificial posture of the soul, a kind of dramatic attitude; or, as men have imagined, an ecclesiastical grimace, the putting on language and looks and a demeanour that might belong to something which is not really felt. Beyond everything else, humility is the victory of truth in the soul and character; it is truth, daring, determining to recognize the insignificance and pollution of a man's real self beneath the purity and majesty of God. But, being such as this, humility is not an isolated excellence; it does not jostle against or undermine other forms of goodness, which equally with itself are integral portions of moral perfection. It is part of a great moral whole. Instead of proscribing, it promotes the growth of virtues, unlike, yet not unfriendly to itself. A humble man, for example, may well have a burning zeal for the welfare of his fellow-man, or an uncompromising hatred of moral evil, or the courage which is strong to work, to struggle, or to suffer. It is very certain that the force which is appa-

rently forfeited by the destruction of self-reliance in the character, is more than recovered when the soul rests in perfect trustfulness on the strong arm of God. Humility, so far from destroying moral force, protects and strengthens it; it sternly represses the petty vanities through which the strength of the soul evaporates and is lost; it keeps even a St. John the Baptist "in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel;" and then, when the hour is come, it opens upon the world the force of a soul which is strong precisely because it has been humble. It is, then, inaccurate to say that the gospel, which undoubtedly discourages selfish ambition and petty vanity, is therefore chargeable with the moral fault of unfitting men for the public duties of life, or for the service of their country.—*Ibid.*

[15612] There are probably two leading objections in a great many minds to cultivating humility; objections which lie generally against the whole of the self-repressing side of Christian ethics. In plain words, humility seems to involve a risk of tampering with sincerity, and a risk of losing moral force. Now, the first of these objections takes it for granted that humility is something dramatic and unreal; that it consists in word or manner which is put on for an occasion, without being dictated by sincere feeling or conviction. This is, however, no more humility than an outward semblance of reverence in church, while the mind is wandering everywhere except in the direction of God's throne, is devotion. Humility is essentially the recognition of truth; it is the taking in act and word and thought that low estimate of ourselves which is the true estimate. If we do not seriously think that such an estimate is the true one, it is only because we have never seen ourselves as we really are. We have yet to learn our real relationship to the Being to whom we owe our existence, and the weakness which impairs our moral force, and the evil that clings to us within. In the meantime, no doubt, it is better not to pretend that we have done so; while it is certain that such pretence, if we should be guilty of it, would not be rightly termed humility. The same notion of humility, as something necessarily dramatic and fictitious, is at the bottom of the apprehension that it involves a loss of moral strength. Of course moral force is lost by every form of untruthfulness, even the least; but genuine humility is in its essence the planting of our foot upon the hard rock of truth and fact, and often when it costs us a great deal to do so. To confess ignorance, to confess wrong, to admit incapacity when it would be useful to be thought capable to decline a reputation to which we have no right—these things, and others of the same kind, are humility in action. They are often notoriously hard and painful; they are always of the greatest possible value in bracing the character; they are so far from forfeiting moral force that they enrich us with it just as all approximations to falsehood forfeit it. If we are

weak, sinful, corrupt, it is better to learn and to feel the true state of the case than to live in a fool's paradise. Every man is the stronger for knowing the worst he can know about himself, and for acting on this knowledge. And if religious men such as David and St. Paul use language about themselves which seems to any of us exaggerated in the excess of its self-depreciation, this is because they saw much more of the holiness of God and of the real nature of moral evil than we do: to them such language is only the sober representation of a plain fact. These great servants of God were not dazzled by any of the inherited or acquired decorations which hide from so many of us our real selves.—*Ibid.*

## VI. BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR'S PORTRAIT OF THE HUMBLE MAN.

[15613] (1) The humble man trusts not to his own discretion, but in matter of concernment relies rather on the judgment of his friends, counsellors, or spiritual guides.

(2) He does not pertinaciously pursue the choice of his own will, but in all things lets God choose for him and his superiors in those things which concern them.

(3) He does not murmur against commands.

(4) He is not inquisitive into the reasonableness of indifferent and innocent commands, but believes their command to be reason enough in such cases to exact his obedience.

(5) He lives according to a rule, and with compliance to public customs, without any affectation or singularity.

(6) He is meek and indifferent in all accidents and chances.

(7) He patiently bears injuries.

(8) He is always unsatisfied in his own conduct, resolutions, and counsels.

(9) He is a great lover of good men, and a praiser of wise men, and a censurer of no man.

(10) He is modest in his speech and reserved in his laughter.

(11) He fears when he hears himself commended, lest God make another judgment concerning his actions than men do.

(12) He gives no pert or saucy answers when he is reproved, whether justly or unjustly.

(13) He loves to sit down in private, and if he may he refuses the temptation of offices and new honours.

(14) He is ingenuous, free, and open in his actions and discourses.

(15) He mends his fault, and gives thanks when he is admonished.

(16) He is ready to do good offices to the murderers of his fame, to his slanderers, backbiters, and detractors, as Christ washed the feet of Judas.

(17) And is contented to be suspected of indiscretion, so before God he may be really innocent, and not offensive to his neighbour, nor wanting to his just and prudent interest.—*Bp. Jeremy Taylor.*

[For further treatment of this subject, see Vol. III., Section X., Division E, p. 344.]

## OBEDIENCE.

### I. ITS OBLIGATION AND NECESSITY.

[15614] Sole obedience would have retained man in paradise, and no one can enter the kingdom of heaven but by obedience.—*Anselm.*

[15615] Neither occupation in holy things, nor lofty contemplation, nor the effusion of penitential tears, can dispense with obedience.—*Bernard.*

[15616] Active obedience to God's will is the great essential of a religious life. The mere possession of knowledge is not necessarily the possession of religion. The true Christian is "that faithful and wise servant whom the Lord when He cometh shall find so doing." It is therefore obvious that perfection of character consists not in knowledge, but in obedience. And this is so, because *obedience is superior to knowledge*. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them," is the testimony of Christ. There are many men who profess religion, who admit the principle which Christ has laid down, yet contrive practically to forget it, and to live as if religion were a thing that belonged only to the intellect. Commonly such men think it sufficient to show some slight regard for the subject of religion. They persuade themselves that to feel religiously will stand in good stead of literal obedience and self-denial. Their profession of religion is apostolically correct and unexceptionable, and hence they conclude that the selfish temperance to which this leads them is quite sufficient to gain the approbation of Christ. They seem to forget that men may think correctly and yet live sinfully. "The devils believe and tremble;" for though they are acquainted with the Word of God, yet their knowledge never brings them hope or peace. So with us. We may know the Word of God in its every particular, and yet that Word may never become the expression of our inner life. For it is difference of character, not difference of creed, that divides man from man. There are those who follow their own will; there are those who are guided by the will of God. Amongst those who seek the fulfilment of their own selfish aims, there may be some who profess a sound creed, but who never pass beyond the mere assent to truth into the wider and diviner realm of action; while among those who are humbly seeking, with an unaffected earnestness and a honest faith, to do the will of God, there may be some, alas! with a sadly defective creed, but to whom, in spite of errors in the mind, God, by His grace, has imparted that rightness of heart which is the true principle of the Christian life.—*G. Bainton.*

[15617] He only is the true Christian who makes it his meat and his drink to do the will of God. "If any man be a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding



his natural face in the glass ; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." Will such a look secure for him a sight of the King in His beauty, or of the land which is very far off? Alas! he only looks ; he does not act, and hence he does not receive into his heart that Divine power which alone can purify his life. But if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. Ah, happy indeed! All things will then be yours, for ye are Christ's. Even here the light which streams from the throne of God above will clothe you with the spiritual lustre of His beauty, and "with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, you will be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," until in the end heaven opens, and you see the crowned Christ standing at the right hand of the throne of God.—*Ibid.*

[15618] Obedience is superior to knowledge, because *knowledge alone is positively criminal*. How vast the dishonour done to God, when with a perfect knowledge of duty, with a complete acquaintance with the Divine will, the man is neglectful of his privilege, and refuses the obedience which of right he owes to God! Will not such an one be accounted as a despiser of His authority and a rebel to His government? Will not the knowledge of the duty be an aggravation of the offence? Will not the knowing and the resolving make the neglect of duty the blacker crime? To us who live in this age of intellectual refinement, in which the false show of mere worldly elegance makes us decent and amiable; to us who are so prone to use the Word of God for the accomplishment of our own selfish aims, how imperative that we should seek to establish that sympathy with the Divine mind and heart, the very existence of which would impel us to fulfil the higher conditions of life. Not only must we know, but we must act, unless we would expose ourselves to the condemnation of an apostle, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."—*Ibid.*

[15619] As soon may the husbandman expect an abundant harvest without improving the season of spring ; as soon may the soldier expect that victory will present him with her palms without striking a single blow ; as soon may the mariner expect to reach the destined shore without unfurling his sails to the propitious breeze of heaven, as the careless, lukewarm professor of Christianity expect to arrive at the kingdom of heaven without a life of active obedience to the will of God!—*Ibid.*

## II. ITS ANIMATING MOTIVES.

[15620] When the bird hath wings given it, it can fly. Though the soul of itself be unable to do that which is good, yet having two wings given it (like that woman in the Revelation), the wing of faith, and the wing of the Spirit, now it flies swiftly in obedience (Ezek. ii. 1 :

"The Spirit did lift me up"). The heart is heavenly in prayer when the Spirit lifts it up. The sails of a mill cannot move of themselves, but when the wind blows, then they turn round, when a gale of the Spirit blows upon the soul. Now the sails of the affections move swiftly in duty.—*T. Watson.*

[15621] One of the most striking peculiarities of the gospel of the Lord Jesus is its continual appeal to the affections. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." Here is the best principle set forth, and the best application of it ; the purest motive and the most perfect practice. The love of Christ is the proper ground of our obedience ; and our obedience, the proper effect, and the sure test, of our love for Christ.—*Abp. Whately.*

## III. THE INEXCUSABLENESS OF DISOBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL PRECEPTS.

[15622] A rule of action must be plain and intelligible, or else it is no rule ; for we can neither obey nor disobey a law that we cannot understand ; and therefore from this idea of religion, that it is a rule of action, there lies a very plain objection against admitting mysteries in religion ; and let the objection have its full force, the gospel is secure from the blow ; for the rule of life contained in the gospel is the plainest as well as the purest that ever the world was acquainted with. In the precepts of Christianity there is no mystery, no shadow of a mystery to be seen ; they are all simple, and to men of the lowest understandings intelligible ; the duties which it requires us to perform to God, to ourselves, and to our neighbours, are such as, when offered to us, we cannot but in our minds and consciences approve : and therefore the gospel, as far as it is a rule of life, is far from being mysterious, since both the sense and the reason of the law are open and plain, and such as we cannot but see, and when we see, consent to.—*Bp. Sherlock.*

[15623] Men are sent to the ants to learn diligence. They are sent to the conies to learn that there is a way which terminates in a great rock. They are sent to the locusts to learn how littles, when combined, may become mighty, sufficient for all the duty and obligation of the day. What if it be found at the last that all the lower orders and ranks of creation have been obedient, dutiful, loyal,—and that the child only has wounded the great heart? "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib ; but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider." God has had no trouble with His creatures—no trouble with his great constellations—they never mutinied against Him ; He has had no trouble with His forests—no rebel host ever banded themselves there. Where has His sorrow lain? His own child, His beloved one, in whom he has written in fairest lines the perfectness of His own beauty, that child has lifted up his puny fist and smitten Him, not in the face

only, but on His heart of love, which only can be forgiven by the shedding of sacrificial blood.

—*J. Parker, D.D.*

[15624] The whole creation, man excepted, acknowledges, though unconsciously, that God is its only Lord and King. One will guides all things with unerring precision; through the rolling firmament that marks the hours and years and cycles, through the world with its seed-time and harvest, and frost, in the hive of the bees, and the beaver's hut, and the lion's lair, the will and Spirit of God breathes, and blows all things whither it listeth. There are no rebellious stars, no inversion of the seasons, no brute creatures that become conscious of the laws of their instinct, and turn and refuse to obey them. Resistance to God begins with that creature that alone knows Him.—*Abp. Thomson.*

[15625] "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." And the ground which He assigns is this, that the law is one whole, given by One Law-giver. Whosoever, then, offends wilfully against any one law, offends against that whole, of which the one law is a part, and despises the whole authority who gave the law. "For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art a transgressor of the law." He is just as much a criminal, although not so great a criminal, as if he had broken all. He has as truly turned away from God, the centre of our being, and turned to something out of God, although he has not turned away so wholly, or so far, as if he had turned away from Him in all. A robe is one whole, and the whole is torn, if one part is torn; one discordant note spoils the whole harmony; the failure of one link destroys the whole chain. Righteousness is one robe, enveloping our whole being; one harmony, making our whole souls into one; one chain, binding earth to heaven, and our souls to God. The principle of love is one. On the principle of love "hang all the law and the prophets." Whoso wilfully offends against one law of love, violates the whole principle of love upon which they hang. He breaks the law as a whole, though not the whole which is in the law.—*Pusey.*

[For further treatment of this subject, see Vol. III., Section X., Division B, p. 15.]

## CONSECRATION.

### I. THE TWO LEADING CONCEPTIONS OF CONSECRATION.

[15626] The two conceptions which belong to all true thought of Christian consecration are (1) A constant Divine operation. (2) An oft repeated human endeavour. God consecrates us by the call and promises of the gospel; by the desire He awakens and the affections He forms; by the inspiration of motives in us, and His

continual guidance of our lives. We consecrate ourselves by the response of our faith; by our obedience to Divine law; by subjecting our judgment and our will to the truth, by giving full play to all godly emotion; by the formation of habits of thinking and feeling which consolidate into holy character and build up a holy life.

—*A. Mackennal, B.A.*

### II. ITS GENERAL SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORT.

[15627] Entire consecration embraces three things—being, doing, and suffering. We must be willing to be, to do, and to suffer all that God requires. This embraces reputation, friends, property, and time. It covers body, mind, and soul. These are to be used when, where, and as God requires, and only as He requires.—*W. Macdonald.*

[15628] Consecration is not wrapping one's self in a holy web in the sanctuary, and then coming forth after prayer and twilight meditation, and saying—"There, I am consecrated." Consecration is going out into the world, where God Almighty is, and using every power for His glory. It is taking all advantages as trust funds—as confidential debts owed to God: it is simply dedicating one's life, in its whole flow, to God's service.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[15629] Consecration is the beginning, the strength, and the consummation of all religion as the human service of God. As man's act it is negative and positive. It is the absolute renunciation of proprietorship in self (Luke xix. 33; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). It is absolute surrender of the entire being to God (Rom. vi. 13). This self-surrender is to be made in the strength of the pale of redemption, the salvation of the gospel being its argument and its power (Rom. xii. 1). Religion or godliness is the habitual, conscious, ever interrupted offering up of the spirit, soul, and body to the service of God in the entire activity of life; the self-surrendering self.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

[15630] The consecrated life is—a life that is more than merely moral and decent; a life that is devoted and heroic; a life that somehow impresses us with a sense of reality and power and beauty altogether its own; a life whose aim and motive is not self, but self-sacrifice; a life which reveals itself by its ceaseless war with all forms of evil; a vital force which is sending out every day those who are filled with it to some task of loving effort or endurance; a life that sheds along the daily paths of men a light which all men feel is light from heaven.—*Bp. Magee.*

### III. ITS NECESSITY.

[15631] Consecration is the sinner's way to holiness. God claims our devotion notwithstanding our unworthiness. Our transgressions have not abated the urgency of His call, nor do they relax

our obligation to be His. God claims our consecration as the first step to our recovery. The sense of our unworthiness must not hinder our response; His purpose is by the acceptance of the unworthy to make them worthy. Under the old dispensation things that had no moral character were called holy where given up to Him, and so God's service hallows the man who gives himself up to it. God calls the unrighteous that He may make them righteous, the ignorant that He may make them wise, the sinful that He may make them holy. Self-consecration is an act of faith; and the saving power of faith is that God works in and for those who trust in Him.—*A. Mackennal, B.A.*

[15632] There is no salvation without personal consecration. This is salvation—to be the Lord's. To say really and experimentally, The Lord is my salvation; His favour is life; His love is heaven; His wrath is hell. All who remain unconverted are cast as briars and thorns and chaff into the burning lake. Enemies are dashed in pieces; unprofitable servants cast into outer darkness. But the saints, the devoted children of God, are confessed and exalted and glorified with Christ for ever and ever.—*Anon.*

#### IV. ITS ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS.

##### 1 Preparedness of heart.

[15633] There is no receiving of Christ to dwell and live with us, unless we turn all our other guests out of doors. The devil, you know, would not take possession of a house till it was swept and garnished; and dares any man imagine that a heart defiled, full of all uncleanness, a decayed, ruinous soul, an earthly, sensual mind, is a tabernacle fit to entertain the Son of God? Were it reasonable to invite Christ to sup in such a mansion, much more to rest and inhabit there?—*W. Chillingworth.*

##### 2 Absolute self-surrender.

[15634] Shall I grudge to spend my life for Him who did not grudge to shed His life-blood for me?—*Bp. Beveridge.*

[15635] When God gives there is no limit, no reserve, no condition. But, on the other hand, neither is there reserve or condition or limit when He demands. It is not so much for so much, but *all* surrendered in absolute trust. It is, "Be thou perfect;" it is, "Leave thy country, and thy kindred, and thy father's house;" it is, "Give Me thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." Is this what you mean by a covenant with God? Think well, for He "is not mocked." His hand is larger than ours, as the sea is larger than a drinking-cup; but He will not accept our hands half full.—*Schönberg Cotta Series.*

[15636] It is said that the Egyptians offered the peach to their gods, because its fruit was like man's heart and its leaf like man's tongue,

to intimate the surrender of the entire man. With nothing short of this will Jehovah be satisfied. He will not accept a divided heart.—*H. Gill.*

[15637] The place of the ark was not in a corner, but in the midst of the tabernacle. Christ must not be thrust into a corner of the soul; His dwelling must be in the midst thereof—in the heart of man; He must have the best and choicest room of man's affection. This Christ requires. My son, give Me thy heart; not thy head, barely to know Me; not thy memory, nakedly to remember Me; nor thy tongue, formally to speak of Me; nor thy foot, only to come outwardly unto Me;—but thy heart, to love and embrace Me, to surrender and yield up all unto Me.—*A. Grosse.*

[15638] He that dedicates *himself* to God, dedicates all; he that doth not dedicate himself, dedicates nothing at all. What Æschinus said to Socrates, "Others give thee gold, silver, jewels, but I give thee myself," that must a Christian say to his God, Ah, Lord! there are some that give Thee their lips, but I give Thee my heart; others give Thee good words, but I give Thee the best of my affections; others give Thee a few cold prayers, but I give Thee my whole soul: for Thou art worthy, Thou only art worthy. What the king of Israel once said to the king of Syria, "I am thine and all that I have," that must a Christian say to His Christ, I am Thine, O Lord, and all that I have.—*T. Brooks.*

[15639] God wants the whole soul. If He had not wanted your wit, He would not have put it into you. If He had not wanted your imagination, He would not have put that into you. If He had wanted no stars in the firmament, no stars would have been there. If there is a flower in the world, God wants that flower. If there is a tree on the earth, He wants that tree. And if there is a trait in the human mind, He wants that trait. You may abuse it; you may employ it in infelicitous ways; but these things only have to do with the question of regulation and education.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[15640] No reservation, no half-heartedness; not the assumption of the form only, but the power; not only the blessings, but the crosses of Christ must be taken. This consecration must be for all places, and seasons, and circumstances; for life and death, and for ever. We must give our understandings to know God; our wills to choose God; our imaginations to think upon God; our memories to remember God; our affections to fear, trust, love, and rejoice in God; our ears to hear God's Word; our tongues to speak God's praise; our hands to work for God; and all our substance to the honour of God.—*A. Grosse.*

[15641] The Nazarites, Temple, Mount Zion, the Sabbath-day, and other festival days, are



said to be holy under the law. In short, the whole Jewish religion did lie in holy times, holy places, holy persons, and holy things; and certainly without this holiness, without this dedication of ourselves to God, we shall never come to a glorious fruition of God. He that doth not dedicate himself really to God, wholly to God, only to God, and alway to God, on earth, shall never come to a sight and vision of God in heaven. If we do not give up ourselves to God, God will never give up Himself to us. God will be only theirs who are really His (Deut. xxvi. 17-19). God will resign Himself up to them who resign themselves up to Him. There is no way to be higher than others, happier than others, more noble and honourable than others, than by making a dedication gift of ourselves to God.—*T. Brooks.*

[15642] They that by their own act and acknowledgment are not themselves their own, but devoted, must also acknowledge they are owners of nothing else. In that mentioned form of surrender in Livy, when Egerius, on the Romans' part, had inquired, "Are you the ambassadors sent by the people of Collatia, that you may yield up yourselves and the Collatine people?" and it was answered, "We are:" and it was again asked, "Are the Collatine people in their own power?" and answered, "They are:" it is further inquired, "Do you deliver up yourselves, the people of Collatia, your city, your fields, your water, your bounds, your temples, your utensils, all things that are yours, both Divine and human, into mine and the people of Rome's power?" they say, "We deliver up all." And he answers, "So I receive you." So do they who deliver up themselves to God, much more, all that they called theirs.—*J. Howe.*

[15643] I had read in my childhood a life of St. Francis, how he forsook father, and home, and fortune, to follow Christ—not seeking merely to obtain a solitary crown of sanctity for himself by self-mortification in the desert, but devoting himself to the poor, the outcast, the lepers; converting publicans and sinners into saints by his loving example, and startling false saints into true penitence by the vision in him of the reality they simulated. Most heavenly and beautiful the life seemed to me, and most Christ-like. At first scorned and buffeted alike by saint and sinner, at last he was revered alike by all. Eden seemed to spring up around his child-like heart; the very beasts and birds (it was said) owned his gentle sway, as when they came to innocent Adam in the garden and he gave them names. But none of these things were his reward. The wealth of the wealthiest would willingly have been thrown at his feet, who had renounced all for Christ; but this was not his reward. Fame, gold, homage, were absolutely worthless to him whose heart had become like that of a little child. They gave him no joy.—*Anon.*

### 3 Cheerful alacrity and resignedness of will.

[15644] If God call a man forth to be His champion and witness, to lay down a life in itself little desirable, in a truly worthy cause, the call of His providence should be as the sound of the trumpet to a truly martial spirit; it should fill his soul with a joyful courage and sense of honour, and be complied with cheerfully, with that apprehension and resentment a stout soldier would have of his general's putting him upon some very hazardous piece of service.—*J. Howe.*

[15645] The time will come when a word will be enough; if the word be the right word, it need not be multiplied. Its force is in its unity; its victory is in its intensity and concentration. Is this possible,—that we shall have but to say to the poet, when he has his harp in fullest sublimest tune, "The Lord hath need of thee," and at once he will begin the praise of Emmanuel? Is it possible that the time will come when we shall need to say to the man of money but one word, "The Lord hath need of thy gold," and the coffers which have not seen the daylight for many a year will fly open at the utterance of that simple word? when we shall have but to go to the young man of education and intellectual power and say, "The Lord hath need of thee," and instantly he will spring to the front and say, "Lord, speak, thy servant heareth."—*Dr. Parker.*

[15646] Consecration is unto universal *submission*, which is active and passive. As active, it is the devotion of the heart to the performance of all the commandments of God as they constitute His own will. This is *obedience*, the first and all-embracing duty of the creature to the Creator as moral governor, an obligation expressed in many ways throughout the two Testaments, and literally absolute, being the foundation alike of the law and of the gospel, which is itself the announcement of the new obedience of faith. As passive, it is the duty and grace of entire self-abandonment to all the appointments of Divine providence, as they are either afflictive or they are inscrutable; in the former case it is *resignation*, in the latter it is this conjoined with *acquiescence*, or silent submission to the will of God.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

### V. ITS CONNECTION WITH OTHER SPIRITUAL STATES.

[15647] There is a difference between consecration and sanctification. The former belongs to us; the latter to God. We cannot have the latter without the former.—*W. Macdonald.*

[15648] God consecrates us with His Spirit; whom He adopts, He anoints; with whom He makes sons, He makes saints; He doth not only give them a new name, but a new nature. God turns the wolf into a lamb; He makes the heart humble and gracious; He works such a change

as if another soul did dwell in the same body.—*T. Watson.*

#### VI. ITS LEVITICAL SYMBOLISM.

[15649] The term used for burning is one that signifies to make to go up in vapour. The essence of the sacrifice ascends to God with acceptance. The fire that consumed the offering, or parts of it, came from God (Lev. ix. 24). It was kept up continually by the morning and evening sacrifice (Lev. vi. 13). This signified that the entire service was to be well-pleasing for ever, from generation to generation, for His sake, who "hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." Although the symbol had its highest fulfilment in the perfect self-surrender of Jesus, it had reference also to us and our oblation to ourselves. The beneficiary of Christ's atonement must be sprinkled with His blood for the covering of his person as guilty; and he must yield himself with Christ as a whole burnt-offering made acceptable by the Holy Ghost. The one without the other can never avail. No less than this is meant by "I am crucified with Christ."—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

#### VII. ITS ADVANTAGES, VALUE, AND BLESSEDNESS.

It dignifies and strengthens the spiritual and moral life, consoles and supports in affliction, and is productive of true happiness.

[15650] It makes men better,—better in all the relationships of life,—better hearted, better parents, friends, neighbours, &c. The lion is now a lamb; the raven a dove; the curse a blessing. By your own dignity, then, consecrate yourselves to the Lord.—*Anon.*

[15651] Do you know that the strongest man in all the world is a consecrated man? Even though he may consecrate himself to a wrong object, yet if it be a thorough consecration, he will have strength—strength for evil, it may be, but still strength.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

[15652] Consecration produces real happiness, solid pleasure, internal joy. So striking is this that the very features are affected by it. Now no terror, no remorse, no writhing gnawing worm within. Now there is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, &c. Some have said, this is only imaginary and delusive. Be it so: what have you in its stead? Why do not deists provide their votaries imaginary felicity too?—*Anon.*

#### VIII. THE POWER WHICH CONSECRATION IMPARTS TO A CAUSE.

[15653] I think John Wesley said if he had one hundred men that loved no one but God, and feared nothing but sin, he would set up the

kingdom of God on earth, and shake the gates of hell in twelve months. And I believe he would have done it. One hundred such men never lived at one time. Talk about Alexander making the world tremble with his army—talk about Napoleon making the world tremble with his army—why, the little tentmaker of Tarsus made the world tremble without an army at all!—*D. L. Moody.*

#### IX. THE INFLUENCE FOR GOOD EXERTED UPON OTHERS BY ITS EXEMPLIFICATION IN THE CASE OF HENRY MARTYN.

[15654] If there was ever a man who seemed to spend his life for nothing, it was Henry Martyn—a man of an exquisite nature, great power, and a sweet and loving disposition. Taking the highest honours at the university, and having the best prospects in the Church, he was led by the Spirit of God to consecrate himself to the cause of foreign missions. For that object he sacrificed that which was dearer to him than life—for she to whom he was affianced declined to go with him. He forsook father, and mother, and native land, and love itself, and went, an elegant accomplished scholar, among the Persians, the Orientals, and spent a few years almost without an apparent conversion. Still he laboured on, patient and faithful, until, seized with a fever, he staggered. And the last record that he made in his journal was, that he sat under the orchard trees and sighed for that land where there should be sickness and suffering no more. The record closed—he died, and a stranger marked his grave. A worldly man would say, "Here was an instance of mistaken zeal and enthusiasm. Here was a man who might have produced a powerful effect on the Church and in his own country, and built up a happy home, and been respected and honoured; but, under the influence of a strange fanaticism, he went abroad, and sickened and died, and that was the last of him." The last of him! Henry Martyn's life was the seed-life of more noble souls, perhaps, than the life of any other man that ever lived. Scores and scores of ministers in England and America, who have brought into the Church hundreds and thousands of souls, and multitudes of men in heathen lands, all over the world, have derived inspiration and courage from the eminently fruitful, but apparently wasted and utterly thrown away, life of Henry Martyn.—*H. W. Beecher.*

#### X. THE CONSECRATED "BODY" OF LIVING SACRIFICE (ROM. XII. 1).

##### 1 Place of the body in the Divine economy.

*As the obedient servant of the inward nature.*  
[15655] So long as God and man were at one, before the fell ruin of the fall, the body occupied its own proper position. As long as the creature found its direct satisfaction in the Creator, so long the body occupied its own subordinate

position, and justly performed its own subordinate functions; but as soon as there came a collision between the creature and the Creator, and the human will set itself up against the will of God, that moment, inasmuch as man was cut off in his inner being from connection with God, it became necessary that he should seek for satisfaction elsewhere, and he sought it in the material world. Cut off from God, he naturally looked to the things seen for the satisfaction and gratification which he had lost. Now, between the human soul and the material world the body is the medium of communication. The creature had previously received its joy and power and life from God, but it is now receiving its joy and power and life from the creature, and in enabling it to do so the body at once assumes a place which originally did not belong to it—steps into a position of importance—assumes and arrogates to itself airs, so to speak, which previously were altogether unknown to it, because of the subordinate position which it occupied. Inasmuch as the human being cannot come into contact with that material world from which it is now to derive its satisfaction otherwise than through the body, the body, so to speak, is able to dictate its own terms to the soul. Hence the interruption of inward and spiritual communion between God and the human soul is followed by nothing less than a moral revolution within man's nature, and those elements in us which were designed to be subordinate become suddenly supreme, and thus our fallen nature comes to present the appearance of an ochlocracy of the worst and lowest type. Nay, it is something worse than an ochlocracy, for the rule of the vilest tyrant mob that ever dominated over a land is a merciful rule as compared with the sway which the body exercises over the human heart, when once the body ceases to be subordinate and becomes supreme. Now we want a second revolution—a revolution back from the state of moral anarchy into a state of moral order, and how is this to be accomplished? In every age man has endeavoured to accomplish it by appealing to his own higher sense of right. The law of the mind has condemned the law of the body.—*Rev. W. Hay Aitken.*

[15656] Our own consciousness of something superior and nobler than our own experience has led to a struggle resembling nothing so much as a forlorn hope, an attempt to storm this citadel of corruption, and to wrest from the command of the body, so to speak, the sceptre which properly belongs to the inner man. And in every age the struggle has been a failure, until at last honest and earnest men have been constrained to cry out, under their woful sense of captivity, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Here it is that the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ comes to our aid. Now, observe how it affects us. It effects, in the first place, a restoration of communication between fallen man and God. It opens up the way back to the Father's heart, and for the flowing forth of omnipotent

power into our fallen nature. It re-establishes communication between my inner being and the eternal nature of the Supreme. These communications being re-established, I find myself once again in a position to draw my satisfaction from the spiritual as opposed to the material. The body no longer occupies a position of inestimable importance to me; but, on the contrary, the gratification which I desire from above being purer, deeper, holier—worthier of myself in every respect—the body is no longer in a position to dictate its own terms; but as the power of the Omnipotent Jehovah flows into my soul, I am in a position through Him to dictate my own terms to it.—*Ibid.*

[15657] When the Holy Spirit of God effects a junction with the human spirit, so to speak—when Christ comes to dwell in our hearts by the Divine Spirit, we find ourselves possessed of a power which is able to keep the body in its own proper place, and turn it from an imperious ruler into an obedient servant, so that we are saved from the old Manichean notion that the body and the material system as a whole is the great source and centre of evil. We discover that the evil does not lie in our bodies, but in the fact that our bodies have been allowed to assume a false position, and arrogate to themselves undue influence. We discover that the body is a necessary and wondrous implement which God can employ for His own purpose. Instead of allowing ourselves to fall back upon a theory of dualism—the soul on the side of God and the body on the side of the devil—we find that the entrance of a new life into our nature has not only restored union between God and us, but has also introduced peace between one element of our nature and another; so that instead of presenting the aspect of a commonwealth divided against itself, destroyed by jarring feud and internecine slaughter—instead of all that, the soul which has been taken possession of by the Spirit of God is now in a position to reduce its body into harmony with itself, so that soul and body may unite in presenting to God a sacrifice in which He Himself can be well pleased.—*Ibid.*

[15658] What is the great aim and object of our probation here on earth? That we should glorify God in a material world and through a material body. Even when our Lord Jesus Christ undertook to vindicate the Divine character and exhibit the Divine perfection, and to show the way home to glory to all His brethren, we remember how in the Psalms attention is called to the fact that a body was prepared Him. It was only through the assumption of a material body such as ours that the Lord Jesus Christ was able to fulfil the mission assigned to Him. What dignity attaches then to these poor perishable bodies of ours, when we grasp this idea! We need no longer talk of them as vile bodies. They are not vile in the moral sense in which we use the word, nor are they thus spoken of anywhere in Scripture. St. Paul speaks of our



bodies of humiliation, not of our bodies as being the centres of moral corruption—nothing of the kind. When, I say, we look at our bodies from this point of view, what a dignity rests upon them, and what a solemn responsibility devolves upon us in the thought that once, and only once, although we are to live for an eternity—once, and only once, have we the opportunity of serving God in a material body and in a material world, affecting matter through the Divine Spirit's exercise of His own blessed functions in this material form which we put at His disposal.—*Ibid.*

## 2 Functions of the body, and how they may be affected by the Holy Spirit.

### (1) *The body as the seat of our animal propensities.*

[15659] Our animal propensities are not necessarily criminal. We cannot make a greater mistake than to suppose this, and in an age when attempts are being made to revive mediæval asceticism, it is most important that this declaration should be made in the clearest possible terms. Our natural propensities are only criminal when they cease to be subordinate to the mind and will of God. When the Holy Spirit takes possession of our hearts, and we are living in His power, the question will not be, Is this self-indulgence right, or the other one wrong? but, Does this, or does it not, interfere with the work of the Holy Spirit within me, and the fulfilment of the mind of God in my life? Thus by the presence of a higher power I am lifted up to a region of higher, deeper, purer joy which is my privilege as one who has been admitted into fellowship with God, then and there I find the very strongest possible inducement to turn my back upon the lower because the higher is so much better. "No man having drunk the old wine straightway desireth the new." But in order to have this power we must walk in the Spirit.—*Ibid.*

### (2) *The body as the seat of our sensuous, distinguished from our sensual experiences.*

[15660] The sensuous and the sensual are closely allied. We look down upon the sensual, and applaud the sensuous. We think it a very desirable thing indeed to be almost the slaves of the sensuous, while we despise the man who is the slave of the sensual. The two are quite as closely connected as the sound of the words indicates, and perhaps more so. Questions are continually cropping up in the experience of the children of God as to how far we ought to indulge in sensuous pleasures. Is the love of music to be indulged, or may we take long journeys for the pleasure of gazing on the snowy ranges of Switzerland? Surely the obvious answer is that none of these things are wrong in themselves, but with the child of God higher considerations predominate in his experience, and the question is not, How shall I most gratify my sensuous propensity? but, How must please God? God may throw sensuous enjoyment in our way, and we may enter into it within

proper bounds. But how many of us talk after this fashion, "I am passionately fond of music;" "I am devoted to painting." Surely Christians have no right to speak thus. It is all very well to enjoy what God gives us to enjoy, but we have no right to be the slaves of any pleasure which is dependent simply upon the vibration of a nerve within our physical system.—*Ibid.*

### (3) *The body as the seat of our physical sensibilities.*

[15661] The physical sensibilities are those, for instance, which are acted upon by the sense of pain, of pleasure, of fatigue, of lassitude, and so forth. How many of us are, more or less, in bondage to our bodies in this respect! A duty has to be done, a work has to be performed, but we happen to feel languid. It is a hot day, and we have some approach to a headache, and we do not feel disposed to do it. What is it that enable us to rise above that sort of lethargy—that physical stupor? Why, to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God; and then the body will present itself to God's service joyfully and willingly, not as a reluctant slave, but as a willing servant. But it is only as we are filled with the Holy Spirit that we shall be able to overcome the claims of our body which represent self-indulgence, and ease, and the avoidance of pain. How few of us are there who are so filled with the Spirit as to discard all these lower considerations!—*Ibid.*

### (4) *The body as our medium of communication with the physical world.*

[15662] It is not a bad thing that we should have to do with the physical world; but let us ask ourselves what is the effect that our bodies are producing upon this physical world? What is the stamp we are leaving behind us wherever we go? In that very remarkable book, "The Unseen Universe," the writer endeavours to indicate the possibility that every thought may be stereotyped, so to speak, on the outer universe, and carried up through infinite regions of space into the very presence of the Almighty by a physical process; that the mere vibration of one of the chords of our brain in thought is in itself stereotyped by a certain removal of the atmosphere by which we are surrounded; and that the motion of the mind is thus printed on matter and passed up to the throne of God. Whether this is correct or not, what a stupendous consideration it is that we are constantly leaving footprints on the sands of time in our daily walk, in our pursuits, and in the way we perform our duties! Let us ask ourselves the question, Is the world the better for us? Is God's mind and will more and more completely reflected upon the natural world because of our contact with it? Do we so fully live in fellowship with the Father, that we stamp and print His mind on all that we have to do with? Is "Holiness to the Lord" written upon the very vessels of our households? These are solemn considerations; but if we are filled with the Spirit of God, our bodies will be the medium

through which this world will be continually affected by Him.—*Ibid.*

(5) *The body as the medium of communication through which we hold intercourse with mankind.*

[15663] Through these lips, and eyes, and so on, we are continually exercising an influence on all with whom we come in contact. Now, the question is, what is the nature of that influence? If we are filled with the Holy Spirit, it will be a revelation of Christ. Our lives will be a constant Epiphany. In these bodies we should carry about the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ. The tone of our voice, the line of our conduct, the look of our eye, everything about us will speak of Christ. I do not think it is a light thing that so many who name the name of Christ, adopt a light, rattling, worldly manner, so as to emulate the manners of this world. Do not let us put on anything like cant or a sanctimonious air. Yet I am bound to say that if we are filled by the Spirit, there will be a certain cheerful recollectedness about us, there will be a grave serenity in the very expression of our countenance, a genial sobriety in our intercourse with others, which will impress those whom we meet and reveal the indwelling God.—*Ibid.*

(6) *The body as the veil which conceals the things unseen from our present sensible experience.*

[15664] Strip off these bodies, and in a moment we are landed in the presence of invisible realities. How solemn a thing it is to think that there is only this between me and eternity, between me and God, between me and all the glories of the invisible world! . . . If it were not for this veil which for a time overshadows us, it would be impossible for me to fulfil the work of my probation. At the same time, however, it will be the great effort of the foe of God and man to employ this bodily organism as a means of deadening our spiritual sensibilities. When the Holy Spirit of God has free course within our being, when we throw ourselves open to His sacred influences, then, may I not say, the veil will become almost transparent. The body has no longer power to conceal. . . . There are times when God draws so near to us, and when we draw so near to Him, that it seems more like seeing than thinking, more like touching and handling than simply contemplating and reflecting. Blessed be God, the more that we advance in the power of the Holy Spirit, the less will these bodies of ours be able to interfere with our inward intercourse with the things behind the veil.—*Ibid.*

3 **Attitude of the inward towards the outward man.**

*Should be that of a superior and governing power.*

[15665] How are we to put our bodies in the right place, and “present” them to God? In the first place, most necessary it is that we ourselves should be surely possessed of the superior

power, otherwise there is no such thing as offering the sacrifice. The sacrifice can only be offered when the fire descends; and unless the Divine Spirit has taken possession of our nature, there is no such thing as offering our bodies a living sacrifice unto God. And the sacrifice is to be a lifelong sacrifice; hence it is only as we walk in the Spirit that this harmony can be maintained, and that, as the result of it, we can continuously offer a sacrifice to God with which God shall be well pleased. We find St. Paul stating that he *smote down* (as the word is in the original) the body, and brought it into subjection. In what sense are we to understand that? “The Flagellants” understood it in a literal sense, and they entertained the hope that by scourging the body they might make it the willing agent of the dictates of the mind. Well, how did Paul keep his body under, and bring it into subjection? Surely he lets us into the secret in various passages in his writings, but especially in one in which he says, “This I say, then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.” As the result of the fall, the body set up on its own account, so to speak; the body claimed to be actually independent of the soul, and went so far as to claim authority over the soul; and now that we have passed from death unto life, the body is still ready to assert its own claim. Habits have been formed of indolence, sensuality, and self-indulgence; all these endeavour to assert themselves, even in the body of those who are possessed by the Holy Spirit of God. Well, how is it to be brought into subjection? Evidently Paul speaks of a conflict, for the figure he uses is that of a conflict as between two pugilists. He represents the body as one pugilist, and himself as the other. He says, “I knock it down.” How is that to be done? “If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” If ye keep the body under by the Holy Spirit, then ye shall find that the current of your life will be strong and deep, for it will be sustained from above.—*Ibid.*

## GOOD WORKS.

### I. GENERAL SIGNIFICANCE OF GOOD WORKS.

[15666] Good works signify the same with a good life—the doing and observing all things which God hath commanded us; our living holily, honestly, circumspectly, fruitfully; the exercising of all the graces of Christ—faith, love, hope; the subduing and mortifying of lust and corruption; the governing our hearts and tongues; the ordering of our carriage towards God and men; all acts of religion, righteousness, mercy, charity, praying, fasting, hearing, sanctifying the Sabbath; lending, giving, forgiving, peace-making, instructing, exhorting, reproving, comforting, denying ourselves, taking

up our cross, following Christ.—*Sir Matthew Hale.*

[15667] Fruits of faith are *good works*, whether inward, within the roof of the heart, as love, awe, sorrow, piety, zeal, joy, and the rest; or outward towards God, or our brethren; obedience and service to the one; to the other relief and beneficence. These the godly man bears, in his time; sometimes all, but always some.—*Bp. Hall.*

## II. THEIR REQUISITE ELEMENTS.

[15668] There are several elements necessary to constitute a work good in the sight of God. *It must be done in conformity with the Divine law.* This is the revealed will of God, the perfect rule by which we are to try our actions. If an action be contrary to this law, it is unlawful and sinful; if it be not therein commanded, it cannot be acceptable unto God, for the law is perfect, and where no command is, there can be no obedience, and so no good work. *It must proceed from a right principle.* It is at the heart that God looks: He judges us by our own internal dispositions; and our actions are only good in His sight when they are the fruits of holy affections. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" is the great commandment of the law, and therefore if there be no love to God, no religious principle, there can be no true obedience. *And it must be directed to a right end.* It is the motive which determines the quality of the action; so that an action, however externally conformable to the Divine law, and however beneficial to man, yet if it be performed from an improper motive, if the intention be wrong, is sinful before a holy and heart-searching God.—*P. J. Gloag, D.D.*

[15669] A thing done may be good in the *substance* of the work, and yet evil in the *manner* of doing of it. The substance of every moral action is its conformity with the rule of goodness—that is, the law; when that thing is done which is commanded by the justice and equity of the law; and thus the Gentiles, which did by nature the things contained in the law, did good; and this moral goodness in heathen men was, without doubt, pleasing and acceptable unto God, so far forth as that He liked the work and approved of it, with that common allowance which He affords to all things that bear any stamp of His own goodness. The circumstances or manner of the action consists in the efficient cause, or person, that doth the work, and in the end or scope that he proposeth to himself in the doing of it. In the person is required sanctification, that the work may be acceptable. And in the end a right intention; for albeit a good intention makes not an action good, yet without a good intention the action cannot be accepted as good in God's sight; the glory of God in Christ must be the scope of all our actions.—*R. Rogers.*

[15670] It is not enough that the inward works of a clock are well constructed, and also the dial-plate and hands: the one must act on the other, the works must regulate the movement of the hands.—*Abp. Whately.*

## III. THEIR IMPORTANCE AND NECESSITY.

I They constitute a principal part of salvation.

[15671] You never will be saved *by* works; but let us tell you most solemnly that you never will be saved *without* works.—*T. L. Cuyler.*

[15672] Though we say there is no trust to be put in the merit of our works and actions, and place all the hope and reason of our salvation only in Christ, yet we do not therefore say that men should live loosely and dissolutely, as if baptism and faith were sufficient for a Christian, and there was nothing more required. The true faith is a living faith, and cannot be idle; therefore we teach the people that God hath not called us to luxury and disorder, but to "good works, that we might walk in them;" that we should root up all the relics of sin, that it might appear that the spirit of sanctification was in us; that Christ Himself dwelleth in our heart by faith.—*Bp. Jewel.*

[15673] Let no one be startled and offended with the doctrine of good works. They necessarily flow from faith. They are faith in action. They are "the living effluence of the tide of Divine love," which refuses to be confined within any prescribed limits, and flows out in deeds of unwearied benevolence and piety. These good works will come into view amid the solemnities of the last day and its glorious retributions. The Saviour-Judge who will occupy the seat of final decision is represented as acknowledging every act done for the least and the poorest of His disciples, as done to Himself, and as determining the reward of such deeds by the motives and the principles from which they sprang, not less than by the purpose and the end to which they were directed. He who repudiates a life of well-doing in the dreamy belief that in the same proportion he is exalting the grace of God, is not the man whose character exhibits the closest correspondence to the pure and sublime requirements of the Book. It is a grand mistake to suppose that the law is repealed by the gospel. In Christianity, the law reappears; only it is transfigured and glorified. Every utterance which was given in the thunders of Sinai is re-echoed with heightened emphasis in the Sermon on the Mount, only it comes silent as the light, and gentle as the dew from the lips of Incarnate Love.—*R. Ferguson.*

[15674] We hold that salvation is by grace, and not by works; but where the works are wanting, the grace cannot be present. We yield to no one in our deep and settled conviction of the unconditional mercy of God in the salvation of our world, but in the degree in which



that mercy has been exhibited, is the obligation resting on the saved and the sanctified to holy obedience and to active service. The deeper our consciousness of redeeming love, and of our indebtedness to that love for present privilege and for the hope of future blessedness, the more imperative is our duty to glorify God in our bodies and our spirits which are His. If we are not our own—if we have been bought with a price—if we have been quickened together with Christ, and raised up together, and made to sit together with Him in the heavenlies—if we have been begotten by His resurrection from the dead to the lively hope of that inheritance which is incorruptible and eternal, then our lives should be one great act of consecration, and our whole being one willing offering for ever. The love of Christ justifies the highest enthusiasm. Nor will this enthusiasm lose any of its fire or its intensity in the world to come. Our activity and our service will be the everlasting recognition and expression of the fact that we have been redeemed by blood and been saved by grace.—*Ibid.*

## 2 They are the only satisfactory evidences of our faith.

[15675] Good works have their proper place. They justify our faith, though not our persons; they follow it, and evidence our justification in the sight of men.—*Rev. George Whitfield.*

[15676] Good works are more visible and conspicuous than faith. Faith is a more occult grace, it may lie hid in the heart and not be seen; but when works are joined with it, now it shines forth in its native beauty; though a garden be never so decked with flowers, yet they are not seen till the light comes; so the heart of a Christian may be enriched with faith, but it is like a flower in the night, it is not seen till works come; when this light shines before men, then faith appears in its orient colours.—*Flavel.*

[15677] Those who travel through deserts would often be at a loss for water if certain indications, which the hand of Providence has marked out, did not serve to guide them to a supply. The secret wells are for the most part discoverable from the verdure which is nourished by their presence. So the fruitfulness of good works of the believer, amidst the deadness and sterility around him, proclaim the Christian's life.—*Salter.*

## IV. NATURE OF THE WORK WHICH GOD HAS GIVEN EACH ONE TO PERFORM.

### 1 Considered generally.

[15678] It is the work which God calls you to do; the work which you must do, if you answer the end of your creation, and if the designs of redeeming love are answered with respect to you. Now this work is not the pursuit of the things of this world; not the pursuit of its riches or honours; and not the pursuit of learning or mere mental improvement. And yet all these

are proper when they are considered as subordinate things. God is willing that you should be diligent in business; He is willing that you should enjoy the esteem and approbation of the great and good; He is willing that you increase in all knowledge, &c. None of these are despicable things, but they are secondary; and you may succeed in all these, and yet neither glorify God, be happy in this life, nor be fit for a future state. This is a direct and specific work, which God calls upon you to perform; in one word, this is the work of religion. The work of personal, scriptural, and relative religion. The work of which Christ is the blessed and perfect example.—*Jabez Burns.*

### 2 Considered as to its four distinct yet united branches.

[15679] (1) There is the work of repentance. If sin is an evil thing, deserving of punishment, and we are personally guilty, it must be repented of. We ought to feel extreme sorrow for it; we ought to confess and deplore it; we ought to renounce and forsake it. Repentance is a necessary, essential work; God enjoins it upon all people. "Except ye repent," &c. (2) There is the work of faith in Jesus Christ. 1 John iii. 23: "And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ." Now it is this faith in Christ which brings us to the enjoyment of forgiveness of all past sin. "Be it known unto you men," &c. Here is God's grace, that He does not require merit or price, but faith in Christ, the one blessed Mediator between Himself and us. (3) Work of obedience to the Lord. If ye have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk in Him, &c. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments," &c. We are to serve the Lord Jesus Christ—living according to the rule He has given. (4) The work of benevolence to our fellow-men. Man is not to live only for himself; not to seek entirely his own things, but the good of others. Society is connected by the links of mutual dependence. We are to love our neighbours, &c. To do good to all. This was Christ's chief work. This is the noblest and happiest work of the Christian. No Christian can possibly be exempt from this work; all have gifts and means to lay out. Time, wealth, influence, all must be expended for God. Look at the world—what ignorance, depravity, misery, &c.; what poverty, affliction, and distress! Think of the widow and the fatherless. Look either at home or abroad. Look at the church—what is to be done there? Work for every Christian; every good man should have his heart full, his hands full, his life full.—*Ibid.*

## V. THE FRAME OF MIND IN WHICH GOOD SHOULD BE WROUGHT.

### 1 In a spirit of humility.

[15680] If you would do anything that is truly good, you must imitate the silkworm, *quæ operatur dum operatur*, "hides herself all the while

she worketh :” thou must clothe thyself with humility, and veil thine actions with the same comely garment, and that is the way to make it acceptable unto God, so as still to remember it is as a certain rule, that the lower thou art in thine own, the higher thou art in God’s esteem.—*Bp. Beveridge.*

## 2 In a spirit of absolute dependence.

[15681] If to depend on the interposition of Providence without human exertion be to tempt God ; to confide in an arm of flesh without seeking His aid, is to deny Him ; the former is to be pited for its weakness, the latter to be censured for its impiety ; nor is it easy to say which affords the worst omen of success. Let us avoid both these extremes ; availing ourselves of all the resources which wisdom can suggest, or energy produce, let us still feel and acknowledge our absolute dependence upon God.—*Robert Hall.*

## 3 In a spirit of hopefulness, patience, and trust.

[15682] Learn these two things : never be discouraged because good things get on so slowly here, and never fail daily to do that good which lies next to your hand. Do not be in a hurry, but be diligent. Enter into the sublime patience of the Lord. Be charitable in view of it. God can afford to wait ; why cannot we, since we have Him to fall back upon ? Let patience have her perfect work, and bring forth her celestial fruits. Trust to God to weave your little thread into a web, though the patterns show it not yet.—*George MacDonald.*

## VI. THE PERMANENT AND PARAMOUNT OBLIGATIONS OF “DOING GOOD.”

### 1 Holy contemplation must not stand before active benevolence.

[15683] If one should soar to a height of contemplation equal to any which Peter or Paul, or any other of the apostles ever reached, but should be informed that some poor man stood in need of a warm broth, or of any other service, it would be far better that he should for the moment awake out of the repose of that contemplation, and bestow aid on that poor man in true charity, than that he should surrender himself to the sweetness of his present contemplation ; for God’s commandments are not to be neglected for the sake of any exercise, however great it may be.—*Ruysbröck.*

[15684] When any one who leads a contemplative life is called to an active life, it is but a second duty added to the first, and not an interruption of his former state. Man must not sleep so profoundly in holy leisure as to forget to do good to his neighbour, neither must he be so entirely occupied in the care of his neighbour as to hinder his being still more closely united to God by contemplation.—*Thomas Aquinas.*

[15685] Query :—Supposing some one had come and told Mary of Bethany, during her sweet converse with Jesus, that a certain beggar was laid at her gate full of sores, or even that one of Christ’s “little ones” but needed a cup of cold water, would the Master have bade her continue sitting at His feet, albeit she had there chosen “the better part” ?—*A. M. A. W.*

### 2 No change of place or surroundings must interfere with good works.

[15686] There may be a furlough from our customary work ; there can never be any lawful vacation from doing good. There may be change of place and scene and fellowship ; there must be none in the spirit of self-sacrificing beneficence.—*A. L. Stone, D.D.*

## VII. MOTIVES INFLUENCING TO THE PRACTICE OF GOOD WORKS AND HOLY ACTIVITY.

### 1 The ingloriousness and unworthiness of wishing to lead a lazy, e-sy-going life.

[15687] Christ has drawn thee to the contest ; the golden arms lie there. When you ought to take them and to handle them, you wish to be ingloriously saved without doing any good work ! Say, if war broke out, and the emperor were here, and you saw some charging into the midst of the phalanxes of the enemy, hewing them down, dealing wounds by thousands, others thrusting with the sword’s point, others bounding now here, now there, others dashing on horseback, and these praised by the emperor, admired, applauded, crowned ; others, on the contrary, thinking themselves well off if they take no harm, and keeping in the hindmost ranks, and sitting idly there ; then, after the close of the war, the former sort summoned, honoured with the greatest gifts, their names proclaimed by the heralds—while of the latter, not even the name becomes known, and their reward is only that they are safe ; to which sort would you wish to belong ? Why, if you were not made of stone, would you not ten thousand times rather belong to the former ? Yea, I beseech and implore you. For if need were to fall fighting, ought you not eagerly to choose this ? See you not how it is with them that have fallen in the wars, how illustrious they are, how glorious ? And yet they die a death, after which there is no getting honour from the emperor. But in that other war, thou shalt in any wise be presented with thy scars ; which scars, even without persecution, may it be granted all us to exhibit, through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, dominion, honour, now and ever, and world without end.—*St. Chrysostom.*

### 2 The nameless shame and guilt of leading an aimless or inactive life, on account of existing needs and spheres of work open to all workers.

[15688] There is much work still to be done in the world by those who follow Christ. There

are fallen brothers and fainting sisters to be ministered unto, and wild, wandering little children to be gathered in and tended, and more wildly wandering men and women to be recovered, and regenerated, and humanized, and pits of danger to be covered in, and lighthouses built on hidden rocks of death, and a devil to fight off God's Paradise, and man's manifold wrongs to be turned into rights, and statute-books to be written anew, and loaves to be broken into starving mouths, and pestilences to be warned off from great cities, and a temple to build, whose floor must be laid in all the lands, and whose top-stone the angels must bring. Who needs then, and who *can*, without nameless shame and guilt, lead an aimless or inactive life?—*G. W. Conder.*

**3 The vast and untold amount of good which the influence of one life, rightly consecrated, may effect.**

[15689] Who can tell what may be done by one man? I shall not quote the testimony of a friend on this point, because he might be partial in his judgment. But once an enemy gave explicit testimony upon this point, and we shall accept his words just as he himself gave them. His name was Demetrius; he was an idol-maker; trade was slipping out of his fingers fast; he was not making so many gods as usual; and he spake to the people of the city in these words: "Ye see and hear that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul persuadeth and turneth away much people, saying, That they be no gods which are made with hands." It was a valuable testimony. This Paul! Not ten thousand Pauls, not a great army of Pauls, but one little man, with an immeasurably great soul, was not only working mightily in Ephesus against idolatry, but throughout all Asia! What *one* life can do! Don't despise yourself; don't say, "My little influence is of no avail." Every man can be intense, though only few men can be extensive in influence.—*J. Parker, D.D.*

**4 The immortality of work done for God.**

[15690] Life passes; work is permanent. It is all going—fleeing and withering. Youth goes. Mind decays. That which is done remains. Through ages, through eternity, what you have done for God, that, and only that, you are. Deeds never die.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

[15691] Whoever sincerely endeavours to do all the good he can will probably do much more than he imagines, or will ever know to the day of judgment when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest.—*Anon.*

[15692] No good thing is ever lost. Nothing dies, not even life which gives up one form only to resume another. No good action, no good example dies. It lives for ever in our race. While the frame moulders and disappears, the deed leaves an indelible stamp, and moulds the very thought and will of future generations.—*Samuel Smiles.*

[15693] Thousands of men breathe, move, and live—pass off the stage of life—are heard of no more. Why? They do not a particle of good in the world, and none were blessed by them as the instrument of their redemption; not a word they spoke could be recalled, and so they perished; their light went out in darkness, and they were not remembered more than the insects of yesterday. Will you thus live and die, oh, man immortal? Live for something. Do good, and leave behind you a monument of virtue that the storm of time can never destroy. Write your name in kindness, and love, and mercy, on the hearts of thousands you may come in contact with year by year; you will never be forgotten. No! your name, your deeds, will be as legible on the hearts you leave behind as the stars on the brow of the evening. Good deeds will shine as the stars of heaven.—*T. Chalmers, D.D.*

[15694] The consideration of triumph is that men do not cease their work. They never die. The irksome part of their labour they rest from; but their works go after, go on with, or have gone before them. A man's life is not simply what you see. The effects of a man's life are not simply those things which you can count, measure, or describe. He who lives in earnest, striving to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, or in the Spirit of Christ, throws into life elements which never die out even here—elements that are not witnesses; that have no report; that come not with observation; that are immeasurable; but that are more real, a thousand times, than the things which are visible.—*Ward Beecher.*

[15695] A man may build his mansion; he may be able and willing to expend uncounted sums in rearing up its walls of marble, and in storing it with every element of beauty within; and yet, dying, he may have done but very little; while over the way was a man who never built a house, except the airy house of character. The invisible precious stones that are laid in the walls of the New Jerusalem he laid round about his own character. He left little save influence; but that influence, day by day exerted, fell into sensitive souls, and shaped this disposition, moulded that one, directed the course of life in another one, and revealed the truth to still another one.—*Ibid.*

[15696] A good man's heart is a seed-sower; and his disposition, not according to his own intent and purpose, but simply according to that nature which God has given to goodness in men—the power of goodness—is perpetually throwing itself out, and out, and out.—*Ibid.*

[15697] The air, as botanists now know, is full of invisible seeds. Fungous plants—those minute mildews which settle on vegetation—are as well organized as if they were dahlias or tulips. They are small, almost inconspicuous, frequently mischievous, in one sense—the economic; never—



theless, they are beautiful and perfect organizations; and how fruitful they are! We cannot even see the spores in which they carry their seeds; but they are filling the air with myriads and myriads and myriads of invisible germs. And that which is true of the vegetable kingdom in its lower form is true also of men's souls, that are carrying seeds innumerable, of thoughts, suggestions, and feelings, and qualities, which fill the air; and because we cannot see them, nor tell where they rise, nor trace their effects back to their causes, men ignore them, or are unconscious of them; but the simple *being good* is itself a power to which there is no physical or revelatory power that can be compared. Unconscious quality is far more influential than voluntary inventions and organizations.—*Ibid.*

[15698] Work in courage; work in faith; work in hope; and work under all discouragements with contentment, knowing that you are doing more than you can see or measure; knowing that you are sowing seeds in the air, and that God's winds are wafting them hither and thither, and that they are springing up you know not where; knowing that you are serving a bountiful Master; knowing that though you are doing but little to the sight, you are doing much to the faith, and much to the invisible thought; knowing that your life will go on in others, as others' lives have gone on in you, and that when the time shall come for you to depart, angels will come for you, and it shall be whispered above you by angelic voices, among which shall be the voices of those whom you have known and loved, "Blessed are the dying; come up hither." And as the vision of angels departs from our imagination, methinks I hear afar off, and growing less and less as they are farther and farther removed, till they sweep into the celestial city, the joyous shout, "Blessed are the dead; they rest from care and sorrow, and their work goes on and follows them."—*Ibid.*

## 5 The real joy which a holy and useful life begets.

[15699] To those who do good in the morning every hour of the day brings pleasure, and for them peace and joy spring from every object around.—*Solomon Gessner.*

[See also Article "JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS" Vol. IV., Section XV., Part IV., Division C (5), pp. 472-489.]

## SELF-EXAMINATION.

### I. ITS DEFINITION AND NATURE.

[15700] Self-examination is that general watchfulness exercised at set times, and issuing in self-knowledge and self-distrust, as opposed to careless living and presumption. It underlies all New Testament ethics, and is enforced by the moralists of every school.—*W. B. Pope.*

[15701] Self-examination is getting oneself ready for the Audit Day, the Inspection Day, the Judgment Day.—*C. N.*

[15702] It is such a scrutiny of a man's self, internally and externally, as that he may know day by day how he stands as compared with the accredited rules of life. In some sense it is the soul's book-keeping, by which it knows just what the condition of its affairs is. He who thus keeps account is like a careful merchant who knows his income and outgo; but he who keeps no such account is like a scheming, speculative man who is always prospering in his own notion, but whose substance is all the time leaking away, and who is losing the very power of wealth.—*H. W. Beecher.*

### II. ITS IMPORTANCE, NECESSITY, AND WISDOM.

[15703] Though not always called upon to condemn ourselves, it is always safe to suspect ourselves.—*Abp. Whately.*

[15704] The necessity of the duty of self-examination arises from these considerations: (1) That our hearts are so apt to deceive us. (2) That there are so many unsuspected and subtle influences that lead us astray. (3) That the tendency of evil is to increase without our consciousness of the fact unless we use constant self-analysis of motives and springs of actions.—*Anon.*

[15705] They who in a crazy vessel navigate a sea wherein are shoals and currents innumerable, if they would keep their course, or reach their port in safety, must carefully repair the smallest injuries, and often throw out their line and take their observations. In the voyage of life, also, the Christian who would not make shipwreck of his faith, while he is habitually watchful and provident, must make it his express business to look into his state and ascertain his progress.—*Wilberforce.*

[15706] There is nothing of greater importance than to sift our thoughts and examine all the dark recesses of our mind if we would establish our souls in such a solid and substantial virtue as will turn to account in that great day, when it must stand the test of infinite wisdom and justice.—*Addison.*

[15707] "Every man should know himself" is such a fundamental principle of true wisdom, that wise men of old affirmed, *Nosce te ipsum*, to be a command immediately derived to the sons of men, by a voice from heaven, as being absolutely necessary to the right guidance of all the actions of human life upon earth.—*H. Sherlock.*

[15708] There is a kind of hypocrisy by which a man does not only deceive the world, but very often imposes on himself: that hypocrisy which conceals his own heart from him,

and makes him believe he is more virtuous than he really is, and either not attend to his vices or mistake them for virtues.—*Addison*.

[15709] "Sailing from Cuba," remarked a sailor, "we thought we had gained sixty miles one day in our course; but at the next observation we found we had lost more than thirty. It was an undercurrent. The ship had been going forward by the wind, but backward by the current." So a man's course may often seem to be right, but the stream beneath is driving him the contrary way.—*Cheever*.

### III. ITS DESIGN.

[15710] The design of self-examination is to discover (1) if we are in the right way, and if our graces are real, and our hopes well founded; (2) what are the hindrances to our spiritual progress.—*Anon*.

[15711] Without self-examination a man can never tell how it is with him, whether he hath grace or no; and this must needs be very uncomfortable. He knows not, if he should die presently, what will become of him, or to what coast he shall sail, whether to hell or heaven. As Socrates said, "I am about to die, and the gods know whether I shall be happy or miserable." How needful, therefore, is self-examination, that a man by search may come to know the true state of his soul, and may guess how it will go with him to eternity.—*J. Watson*.

### IV. ITS RULES AND REGULATIONS.

#### I General.

[15712] There are three rules useful in self-examination: First, that a man do not examine himself by himself. He may be better than formerly, but this is not enough; second, not to examine himself by others, since this also falls below the true standard; third, not to judge of himself by what others say of him, since they can never know the whole truth as to character and motives, or even actions.—*J. Smith*.

[15713] Learn to know thyself through the faults of other people and thine own, though more so through the manner in which thou dost judge other people's faults.—*Lavater*.

[15714] Every man should know (1) The general condition of his life—whether or no he is religious, or trying to be so. (2) His general conformity or nonconformity to outward duties—prayer, Sabbath worship, and ordinary means of grace. (3) The state of his practice as regards general ethics—truthfulness, honesty, purity, industry. (4) His centres of action—whether he is actuated by a sense of right and wrong, or merely of praise and blame, taste or pride. (5) His special attainments in a distinctively religious experience as opposed to ordinary experience—"Am I humble, meek, patient, self-sacrificing, firm, prayerful, and

prayer-loving?" (6) The whole flow of his attainments in regard to the life that is to come—"Am I walking with God in loving, constant companionship? is heaven in my thoughts, am I in commerce with it, and do I look forward to it as my rest?"—*Ward Beecher*.

#### 2 Specific.

(1) *It should be searching and comprehensive, pointed and practical, wise and discriminative.*

[15715] Let us ask ourselves seriously and honestly, "What do I believe after all? What manner of man am I after all? What sort of show should I make after all, if the people round me knew my heart and all my secret thoughts? What sort of show, then, do I already make in the sight of Almighty God, who sees every man exactly as he is?"—*Rev. C. Kingsley*.

[15716] Beethoven was in the habit of playing his symphonies on an old harpsichord as a test. They would thus be made to stand out in their true character, with nothing to hide their faults or exaggerate their beauties. If, then, they commended themselves to his ear, they were good, and might safely be sent forth to the world. Thus wisely may we test our character, endeavouring to ascertain how it manifests itself—not on great and rare occasions, or before the public eye, where there is a chance for display and applause, but in private, in the little, homely, everyday duties, which attract no particular attention, and reward us with no praise. If, in the retired nook of your own breast, in the regulation of your thoughts and feelings; if, in the bosom of your family, in the monotonous round of home life each day, you preserve a sweet, serene temper, and go forward cheerfully, taking a real pleasure in duty as duty, and in all little matters honestly strive to serve and please the heavenly Master; if, in a word, your piety sounds well on such an unpretending harp, and there it is good, genuine, tested, it will one day win acclamation from a vaster and nobler throng than ever was thrilled by the genius of Beethoven.—*Anon*.

[15717] Examine in that as to which you are naturally the least inclined to examine yourselves; that respecting which you are the most afraid to examine; that which you find self-love constantly endeavouring to draw a veil over; that which, whenever you do turn the inspection that way, begins to throw reproach and humiliation; that which you most feel you need to know when you approach the throne of God; that, any uncertainty about which awakens the most solicitude and apprehension whenever you think of death; that which forces itself on your attention when you think what the inhabitants of heaven must be.—*J. Foster*.

[15718] Self-examination (1) should not expend its chief exercise on mere external conduct; (2) should avail itself of all circumstances which may aid in self-revelation; (3) should not disregard slight symptoms; (4) should com-

bine together many matters of indication and proof; (5) must beware of making some doctrinal point its great test; (6) should be powerfully enforced by doubt or uncertainty.—*Ibid.*

(2) *It should be particular, dealing with sins to which we are specially inclined.*

[15719] Give no quarter unto those vices which are of thine inward family, and having a root in thy temper, plead a right and propriety in thee. Examine well thy complexional inclinations. Raise early batteries against those strongholds, built upon the rock of nature, and make this a great part of the militia of thy life. The politic nature of vice must be opposed by policy, and therefore wiser honesties project and plot against sin; wherein, notwithstanding, we are not to rest in generals, or the trite stratagems of art. That may succeed with one temper which may prove successful with another. There is no community or commonwealth of virtue, every man must study his own economy, and erect these rules unto the figure of himself.—*Sir Thomas Browne.*

(3) *It should be exercised on a principle of independence, to a considerable extent of the opinions and estimates of others.*

[15720] It is true that good use may be made of those opinions, whether favourable or hostile. But consider, nevertheless, how those opinions may have a wrong effect—in two ways: First, suppose they are partial and favourable, to a highly flattering degree; and what then? The testimonies of partiality and approbation—the praise, the flattery, perhaps the admiration—will not the man be mightily inclined to take all this for just, even to the utmost point? Will his self-love sound a less musical strain in his ear? If even he had doubted before, to assume so much in his own favour, will he not confidently assume it now? His faults will shrivel, his excellences will expand to the dimensions of so flattering an estimate. He will willingly forget to consider how much of circumstance or fancy there may be in this partiality, and how much there is in him that the partial judges cannot know. But, secondly, suppose the contrary case—unfavourable opinion, suspicion, censure, depreciation; what then? Then an excitement of all the defensive feelings! Then all these censures are from ignorance, perverseness, or perhaps even from jealousy and envy! He cherishes the more his beloved self, thus suffering injustice, with an extenuation of what cannot be altogether denied, and a forced magnifying of supposed worthier characteristics. There is, therefore, a necessity for cool, deliberate independence of judgment. And this will be promoted by a solemn sense of standing before the judgment of God, the grand requisite in all self-examination. What does that all-searching, infallible Intelligence see and detect? In that presence repute, pretensions, semblances, presumptions, excuses, clear away. There, the self-examiner, if he will stay there long enough

in seriousness and simplicity, is reduced to the very truth.—*J. Foster.*

(4) *It should be systematically frequent, in fact a regular daily practice.*

[15721] It is observed of the Dutchmen that they keep their banks, notwithstanding the threats of the insulting ocean, with little cost and labour, because they look narrowly to them, and stop them up in time. If there be but a small breach they stop it presently, and hereby save much charge and trouble. Frequent examination will do this for the Christian; it will maintain his peace with little charge and trouble comparatively.—*G. Swinnoek, M.A.*

[15722] Housekeepers, by frequent inspections and attention, preserve the brightness of their furniture and utensils. Because of this daily carefulness the house does not need often to be “turned out of windows.” So must we keep our habits and principles bright and serviceable if the house of our spirit is to be a comfortable home, and its furnishings beautiful and dear to us. We shall not need great and frequent disturbance of our inward life if we practise daily order and self-revision.—*Lynch.*

[15723] Sum up by night what thou hast done by day,

And in the morning, what thou hast to do;  
Dress and undress thy soul; mark the decay  
And growth of it: if, with thy watch, that too  
Be down, then wind up both; since we shall be  
Most surely judged, make thy accounts agree.  
—*Herbert.*

(5) *Every year as it passes should be thoroughly reviewed on an organized method.*

[15724] As there is no watch, be it ever so good, but must be daily wound up, and now and then taken asunder to remove the rust and dirt, and mend or repair what may be broken or out of order, so he that is careful of his soul ought to wind it up daily to God by exercises, and at least once a year take it asunder to redress, rectify, and examine diligently all its affections and passions, that all its defects may be repaired; and as the watchmaker anoints the wheels, the springs, and all the movements with some delicate oils, that the motions of the wheels may be more easy, and the whole of the watch less subject to rust, so a devout person, after taking this review of his heart, in order to renew it, must anoint it.—*Francis de Sales.*

[15725] Once a year the business man must know how things stand. He reviews the books, writes them up, and draws out on a fair balance-sheet all his worldly circumstances; so many goods, so many liabilities; so much capital that is comparatively worthless, so much that can be easily turned into cash; so many debts; so many bills out that are perfectly good, so many that are doubtful. In other words, he looks over all the affairs of the year, and knows just what position he occupies. Ought we not to be



just as scrutinizing in the matters of the soul?—*Talmage*.

[15726] Was there ever a successful merchant who did not balance his books year by year? I have noticed, in reading the details of courts of bankruptcy, that fortunes are as surely wrecked by indolence or carelessness, as by wild speculations, or boundless extravagance. Here is a trader, bankrupt. Sober, honest, industrious, anxious to pay every one their own, not living in splendour at other men's expense, he should have thriven. Yet this honest man has to take a place beside rogues—he, and others, throwing all the blame on fortune; imputing his misfortunes to the blind goddess, her capricious temper and unsteady wheel. But the examination comes, like that day of a greater judgment which shall reveal the true and unsuspected causes that have wrought the ruin of many souls. The debtor's books are produced; and now it appears that last year, and the year before, and for many years, there has been no balance struck. Fancying that all was right, too careless to think of it, too busy to spare time for taking stock, or too indolent to go through its irksome labour, from year to year he has put off striking a balance, till now he strikes on the rock ahead. The crash comes. He opens his eyes on ruin, and finds, too late, that for years he has been driving a losing trade. He is a bankrupt for want of a balance. And the general practice of men of business, their custom of year by year taking stock, examining their books, and striking a balance to know how they stand, is a lesson of the highest value. Our everlasting salvation may turn on it. People go on dreaming that all is right when all is wrong; nor wake to the dreadful truth till they open their eyes in torment. What pains ought we to take to avoid the remotest chance of such a calamity! If men take such care of their earthly fortunes, how much greater our need to see how we stand with God; and do with our spiritual what all wise merchants do with their earthly interests—review the transactions of every year!—*Guthrie*.

(6) *Care must be observed that it lapse not into morbid self-dissatisfaction or spiritual hypochondria.*

[15727] This duty requires to be guarded against morbid self-anatomy, and especially against certain perversions of it under human direction (Confessional). The supreme safeguard is that it be conducted according to the standard of Scripture, and in the presence of the Searcher of hearts (see Rom. i. 9; Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24).—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

[15728] By undue and overstrained self-inspection the mind is apt to become morbid and depressed, and to breed scruples which tease and harass without producing any real fruit. The man becomes a valetudinarian in religion, full of himself, his symptoms, his ailments, the delicacy of his moral health; and

valetudinarians are always a plague, not only to themselves, but to everybody connected with them.—*Dean Goulburn*.

[15729] Self-introspection may easily and will certainly become morbid if it be not checked by a constant *outlooking* of the mind. True religion is all comprised in two precepts—Look into yourself to see your own vileness; look out of yourself to Christ. Little enough health, comfort, peace, and satisfaction shall we derive from the first of those precepts, unless we constantly couple with it the second in parallel columns.—*Ibid*.

[15730] Anatomy schools, and the nauseating operations performed in them, are absolutely essential to the maintenance of health. Unless our medical students acquaint themselves by dissection with the structure of the human frame, their practice will be all in the dark—uncertain, empirical, blundering. But to live in an anatomy school would be to inhale a pernicious atmosphere. Nay, open the windows, and let in the air and light of heaven; and the study of the subject having been completed, let the student walk abroad and drink into his constitution the genial influences of nature. To be ransacking the human structure all day, useful as the results may be, is an exercise which has morbid tendencies that require counteraction. Learn a lesson respecting that self-inspection which both reason and the gospel recommend. Live not *too much* with thyself in the close chamber of spiritual anatomy. Doubt and disquietude, and subtle metaphysical difficulties, and over-cavassing of motives, and splitting of hairs, will be the least mischief resulting from such a system.—*Ibid*.

[15731] The knowledge and deep consciousness of thy dark guilt is only valuable as a background, on which to paint more vividly to thy mind's eye the rainbow colours of the love of Jesus. Walk abroad ever and anon, and expatiate freely in the sunlight of God's grace and love in Christ. It is free as the air to those who would inhale it, bright as the sunlight to those who place no obstructions in its way. Breathe it, bask in it, walk in it; there is no other mode of really invigorating the spiritual system. A religion, if it is to be strong, must be joyous; and joyous it cannot be without the light of God's love in Christ shining freely into every corner of the soul.—*Ibid*.

(7) *The duty must not be mechanically performed, nor regarded as an end instead of a means.*

[15732] It is fatally easy to allow the exercise to be drawn down from its high moral and spiritual aim to the level of a form. A string of questions put to the conscience every evening, never varying with the circumstances of the day, and answered almost mechanically, is what the exercise often reduces itself to. The way to gain ground is to quicken and vitalize the forms.

Throw life and reality into them by regarding this great duty on a large, comprehensive, and spiritual scale.—*Ibid.*

[15733] A Highlander who purchased a barometer under a mistaken idea of its purpose, complained that he could not see that it had made any improvement in the weather; and those who use signs and evidences for an intent which they will never answer, will be sure to complain that their faith is not increased, though they are always practising self-examination. Yet a barometer has its uses, and so have evidences of grace. To feel the pulse is an admirable thing; the mistake is to put this in the place of strengthening food or tonic medicine.—*Spurgeon.*

## V. ITS STANDARD OF COMPARISON.

### 1 The law of God as revealed in His Word.

[15734] Take your souls to the glass of the law, and go from one precept to another; and when you have done, then go to the gospel, and be sure you do not deal slightly. And when you have well studied the number and quality of your sins, then consider the justice and holiness of God, which you shall understand by the same law and gospel; but more especially shall ye know it by going to the cross of Christ; for we never know as we ought the evil of sin, and our misery thereby, until we know what He endured to make expiation for it. They that never knew themselves are most certainly without love to Christ.—*C. Ness.*

[15735] Honest men will examine their weights and measures by the standard, that if they be defective they may be mended. The honest heart will examine its thoughts, its words, its actions, by the royal law, that their unsuitableness to its strictness and latitude may be repented of, and to the utmost of its power reformed.—*G. Swinnock, M.A.*

### 2 The life of Christ who fulfilled the law of God.

[15736] We should compare our lives with the life of that Person who acted up to the perfection of human nature, and is the standing example as well as the great guide and instructor of those who receive His doctrines.—*Addison.*

## VI. ITS INFLUENCING MOTIVE.

[15737] It is only as we rightly bear in mind the solemnity and awfulness of that day of final decision that we can find a sufficient motive for the real and constant performance of the primary and imperatively necessary, though so commonly neglected or carelessly discharged, duty, of arraighing ourselves at the bar of an enlightened conscience.—*C. N.*

## VII. ITS BENEFITS.

### 1 It advances our knowledge of God.

[15738] Many sciences are invented by the  
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sons of men; but there is none greater, none more profitable, than each man's knowledge of himself. There is not a more compendious way to the knowledge of God than the knowledge of a man's self.—*Bernard.*

### 2 It leads us to watchfulness in the future, so as not to be overcome by temptations to which we have already succumbed.

[15739] An enemy may much sooner be forced out of his holds when he has newly taken possession, than when he has continued so long as to cast up his banks, make his ditches, plan his guns, and fortify them. After we have been foiled by our spiritual enemies, and by examination find out the cause, it will make us more watchful at that gate at which they entered, and careful of that particular wherein they got the advantage of us.—*G. Swinnock, M.A.*

### 3 It produces a humble spirit.

[15740] One of the evidences that you have been wise in your self-examination will be that you are humble. If, after self-examination, a man rises more timid, more self-satisfied, it is an indication that he has not examined himself rightly. No man can compare himself with the Divine standard and not find how he errs in his conduct. In following the standard he will rise until he comes to the spiritual law of God; and he is so immeasurably beneath that, he is so defective on every side, that a consideration of his condition ought to give him a sense that he is wholly dependent on the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ.—*Ward Beecher.*

### 4 It increases a feeling of sympathy and pity for others.

[15741] If your self-examination gives you a feeling of superiority over other men, and inclines you to thank God that you are not like them, you may be sure that the devil, not God, has been helping you; for no man can be made conscious of his utter imperfection without being led, if he have the Spirit of God in him, until he comes to have a feeling of sympathy and pity for others.—*Ibid.*

## VIII. ITS DIFFICULTY.

It is a duty which is distasteful and irksome, especially to the natural mind.

[15742] The sovereign excellency and necessity of this duty needs no other nor greater proof of it than this one consideration, that nothing in nature can be more grievous and offensive to a sinner than to look into himself; and generally what grace requires nature is most averse to. It is indeed as offensive as to rake into a dunghill; as grievous as for one to read over his debts, when he is not able to pay them; or for a bankrupt to examine and look into his accounts, which at the same time that they acquaint must needs also upbraid him with his condition. But as irksome as the work is it is absolutely necessary. Nothing can well be imagined more painful than to probe and search

a purulent old sore to the bottom ; but for all that the pain must be endured, or no cure expected.—*South.*

[15743] Of all branches of knowledge, the knowledge of ourselves and of our sins is that which is most neglected. In all other sciences, knowledge flatters our vanity, raises us in the eyes of our neighbours, increases our influence in society ; but a searching inquiry into the state of our heart wounds our pride, and lowers us in our own esteem. Hence it is that we meet continually with persons possessed of great shrewdness and sagacity in all other matters, who are most lamentably ignorant of themselves. Many have attained an extraordinary knowledge of mankind in general, and can discern at once the weak points of every neighbour, but are pitifully blind to every one of their own infirmities ; it is amusing to observe, that of all persons within the circle of their acquaintance, they are perhaps the only parties to whom their own failings are unknown. There are individuals, skilled in all other science, utterly ignorant of this ; capable of calculating the motions of the heavenly bodies, and yet knowing nothing of the movements of their own hearts—of predicting the eclipses of the sun and planets, but unacquainted with the dark spots on their own characters—of decomposing the material substances around them, but not of analyzing the motives by which they are swayed. Many, we suspect, pass from the cradle to the grave under the influence of divers views, feelings, impulses, and passions ; but without once stopping to inquire what is their character or state in relation to God and His law. Rather than confess the danger, by casting out their sounding-lines and measuring the depths, they permit themselves to drift along they know not whither, till at last death, like the cry of “Breakers ahead !” awakes them from their lethargy, but only to show them stranded as a wreck on the shores of eternity. This shrinking from inspection—this unwillingness on the part of the human heart to submit to examination—this trembling and shaking, and studious concealment—all are indicative of conscious guilt. The party would not be so disinclined to look into his accounts, were he not afraid to discover losses, debt, and probable bankruptcy. The limb would not so shrink were there not disease preying upon it.—*McCash.*

[15744] Men are not willing to have the light shine into the darkness of their soul. They love darkness rather than light, not in respect to the great round of vices and crimes, perhaps, but in respect to the minor faults to which they themselves are addicted. Men do not like to be convicted of vanity, cowardice, selfishness, deceitfulness. And yet a man who is in earnest, and seeks for life eternal, and whose soul is set on Christian manhood, must be willing to know the truth and the worst about himself.—*Ward Beecher.*

#### IX. THE DANGER OF TRUSTING, WITHOUT DUE EXAMINATION, TO THE IMMEDIATE VERDICT OF OUR OWN HEARTS.

[15745] Suppose (and in a commercial country like this the supposition has not been unfrequently realized) that the chief agent in some great speculation is a man who, though most untrustworthy, has all the art of conciliating trust. Suppose him to be fluent, fair-spoken, prepossessing in manners and appearance, and to be especially plausible in glossing over a financial difficulty. Advance one more step in the hypothesis and suppose him to be a private friend of many of those who are embarked with him in the speculation ; allied to some of them by marriage, and more or less in habits of intimacy with all. If such a person is at the head of affairs, and intrusted with the administration of the funds contributed by all, it is evident that he might impose upon the contributors to almost any extent. His artful representations would quiet their little panics, when such arose ; and he would have it in his power to keep them still while embezzling their resources, until the great crash comes, which announces to many of them, as with a clap of thunder, that they are bankrupt. Now the peril of such trust in worldly matters supplies a very fair image of the peril of a still more foolish and groundless trust in spiritual things. Our hearts are notoriously most untrustworthy informants in any case where we are ourselves interested. It is not only Scripture which asserts this. We confess it ourselves, and re-echo the verdict of Scripture, when we say of any slight matter with which we happen to be mixed up, “I am an interested party, and therefore I had better not be a judge.” But while our hearts are thus, by our own confession, untrustworthy, there is no one in whose assertions we habitually place more trust. We think we cannot be deceived respecting ourselves ; we know at all events our own motives and intentions, if we know anything. The unkind, the insincere, the ungenerous, the ungrateful, never, we think, had any affinity with our nature. Faults there may have been, no doubt, in our temper and our conduct—feelings and transactions, too—for which we feel that we are in account with God ; but we have our own heart to manage and superintend the account ; and it soothes us with the assurance that we never had any very bad intention, and so the whole affair will turn out well in the end—we need not fear the ultimate exposure. Self-love conspires with trust in our own hearts to make dupes of us as regards our spiritual account. Proverbially, and in the verdict of all experience, love is blind ; and if love be blind, self-love being the strongest, the most subtle, the most changeless, the most ineradicable of all loves, is blinder still. Self-love will not see, as self-trust cannot see, anything against us. With these strong partialities to self in our own heart ever operative, within us, and never probably capable, even in the best men, of being entirely detached from us, to what an extent may we



be imposed upon, in that which most vitally and nearly concerns us, if we do not from time to time call in and examine the accounts! What frightful arrears may we be running up, unawares to ourselves, if we do not sharply check and suspiciously watch this heart, who administers for us the account between us and God!—*Dean Goulburn.*

#### X. NEED OF SELF-EXAMINATION AS A PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

[15746] Within your own consciences, none being present but God who seeth all things, enter into judgment with yourselves, and so draw near to the Holy Table.—*St. Chrysostom.*

[See Communion Office, also Catechism, Book of Common Prayer.]

### HUMILIATION.

#### I. THE PENITENCE OF SELF-HUMILIATION AS PRACTISED IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH, AND ITS BEARING UPON PRESENT GODLY DISCIPLINE.

[15747] In the Primitive Church "satisfaction" included the whole work of penitence. . . . There was "a godly sorrowing," "*satisfactionibus et lamentationibus peccata redimuntur*" (Cyprian), the sorrowing satisfaction of penitence, as Maximus calls it. There was the earnest, heartfelt prayer of a true contrition, "*Sejuniis precosolere*," as Tertullian says, prayer being always a main element of the "satisfaction" due to God. Fasting also is enjoined by Tertullian according to our Lord's assurance that some forms of evil would only yield to "prayer and fasting." In all these essentials the discipline of penance must for ever be unaltered. There must be "satisfaction" also to man. "If I have wronged any man by false accusation," said Zaccheus, "I restore him fourfold." Every uncharitable word must be recalled, every offence atoned, every injury must be repaired to the best of our ability, even as every step in a wrong direction must be retrod, every unlawful gain must be put away, and if no other channel be open—"the poor are always with you"—let the amount be given in alms. The Talmud makes a more near approach than usual to Christian ethics when it says that the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement is applicable only to sins against God, but "with respect to sins against our neighbour satisfaction must first be made." In later times corporal austerities were largely introduced, and menial offices to break down the proud spirit of rebellion; solitude and silence, the endurance of heat and cold, bodily chastisement, &c. These, however, were commutable for a money payment, . . . but money commutations were open to abuse. Penance was made so painful as to drive penitents to this easier method of satisfaction.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[15748] In the Churches of the West a place was set apart in Lent for penitents, where they prostrated themselves with tears and every outward sign of sorrow; the congregation also joining in the lament, and using the seven penitential psalms. . . . The bishop at length raised them from the ground, prayed over them, and dismissed them from the church; after a course of fasting, &c., absolution was conferred, and the penitent received once more into communion. It was with reference to this godly discipline of the Primitive Church that the addresses in our Communion Service were framed. If the difficulty of restoring it was great at the time of the Reformation, it is now impossible, and few, indeed, would think it desirable.—*Ibid.*

#### II. ITS BENEFIT AND VALUE WHEN RIGHTLY USED AND UNDERSTOOD.

[15749] The great use of humiliation is to fit the soul for its approach to God Himself, from whom it has revolted. As it becometh not any creature to approach the God of heaven but in reverential humility, so it becometh not any sinner to approach Him but in contrite humility; who can come out of such wickedness and misery, and not bring along with him the sense of it on his heart? It becometh not a prodigal to meet his father as confidently and boldly as if he had never departed from him; but to say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son" (Luke xv. 18). It is not ingenuous for a guilty soul, or one that is snatched as a brand out of the fire, to look towards God with a brazen face, but with shame and sorrow to hang down his head and smite upon his breast and say, God be merciful to me, a miserable sinner. "For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (1 Peter v. 5).—*R. Baxter.*

#### III. ITS PROMINENT AND MOST ESSENTIAL CONNECTION WITH THE WORK OF REPENTANCE.

[15750] "Turn to the Lord with weeping. Rend your hearts, and turn to the Lord" (Joel ii. 13). That is, in one word, repent. So James iv. 8, "Draw near to God," which is the general, or whole of repentance, afterwards explaining it in the particulars, he addeth first, "Cleanse your hearts, and purge your hands." There is renovation, or reformation: and then, vers. 9, 10: "Suffer affliction," that is, be touched with smarting grief for your sins, as if you were in some grievous outward affliction, "Let your laughter be turned into weeping, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God." There is the other part, contrition, or humiliation.—*D. Dyke.*

#### IV. THE VOLUNTARY HUMILIATION OF CHRIST.

[15751] The Son of God submitted to humili

liation in accomplishing the redemption of mankind. . . . It is set forth by theologians as shown in His birth, His circumstances, temptation, sufferings, and death. (1) In His *birth*: He was born of a woman—a sinful woman; though He was without sin (Gal. iv. 4); of a poor woman (Luke ii. 7, 24), in a country village (John i. 46); in a stable—an abject place; of a nature subject to infirmities (Heb. ii. 9), hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, &c. (2) In His *circumstances*: laid in a manger when He was born, He lived in obscurity for a long time, probably worked at the trade of a carpenter, had not a place where to lay His head, and was oppressed with poverty while He went about preaching the gospel. (3) It appeared in His *reputation*: He was loaded with the most abusive railing and calumny (Isa. liii.), the most false accusations (Matt. xxvi. 59, 67), and the most ignominious ridicule (Psa. xxii. 6; Matt. xxii. 68; John vii. 35). (4) In His *soul*: He was often tempted (Matt. iv. 1, &c.; Heb. ii. 17, 18, iv. 15), grieved with the reproaches cast on Himself, and with the sins and miseries of others (Heb. xii. 3; Matt. xi. 19; John xi. 35), was burdened with the hidings of His Father's face, and the fears and impressions of His wrath (Psa. xxi. 1; Luke xxii. 43; Heb. v. 7). (5) In His *death*: scourged, crowned with thorns, was crucified between two thieves (Luke xxiii.; John xix.; Mark xv. 24, 25). (6) In His *burial*: not only was He born in another man's house, but He was buried in another man's tomb; for He had no tomb of His own or family vault to be interred in (Isa. liii. 10, &c.; Matt. xiii. 46).—*Encyclopædia (McClintock and Strong)*.

## V. THE EVIDENCES OF TRUE CONTRITION.

[15752] The word contrite signifies beaten or bruised, as with hard blows, or a heavy burden, and so in Scripture language imports one whose heart is broken and wounded for sin, in opposition to the heart of stone. The evidences of a broken and contrite spirit are (1) Deep conviction of the evil of sin. (2) Humiliation under a sense of it. (3) Pungent sorrow for it. (4) Ingenuous confession of it. (5) Prayer for deliverance from it. (6) Susceptibility of good impressions.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards)*.

## CONFESSION OF SIN.

### I. THE REQUISITE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRUE CONFESSION.

#### 1 It should be both of tongue and heart.

[15753] When thy tongue and heart agree not in confession, that confession is not agreeable to God's pleasure; he that confesses with his tongue, and wants confession in his heart, is either a vain man or a hypocrite; he that hath confession in his heart, and wants it in his tongue, is either a proud man or a timorous.—*F. Quarles*.

#### 2 It should be frequent.

[15754] As in the emptying of a pond where there are many streams rising and bubbling up, if we stop and intermit the work, the pond grows presently full again. Truly our hearts and consciences are like such ponds, in which there are many corrupt streams still spouting up. Now, confession is the clearing of it out, which if we do but for a while intermit, our consciences again grow as full of sin and guilt as ever.—*Bp. Hopkins*.

#### 3 It should be prompt, not restrained and delayed.

[15755] Unconfessed sin is like rusty iron in the flesh, rankling and festering, or like poison in the blood. A prompt confession is the surest remedy.—*Anon*.

#### 4 It should be frank and sincere.

[15756] Sin may be confessed but in part, or with the endeavour to extenuate its guilt. We naturally seek to excuse and soften. Adam cast the blame of his sin upon Eve, and Eve upon the serpent. Aaron and Saul blamed the people. Pilate blamed the Jews. But true confession must be frank as well as full, admitting all the aggravations of our sins—knowledge, privilege, warnings, reproof, &c. (So Dan. ix. 11-19).—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

#### 5 It should be contrite, and attended with real sorrow of heart.

[15757] Let us not think that we can deceive the Omniscient God with a few heartless words and with an unbroken heart. The further a Christian advances in grace, the deeper and fuller will his contrition in confession be. It is beautiful to observe how much deeper the tone of the Confession is, in the Communion Service of the Church of England, than in the "General Confession to be said of all men."—*Ibid*.

#### 6 It should be mixed with faith.

[15758] Confession must be in faith of God's mercy for forgiveness of, and help against, the sin confessed. We must confess, not as the convicted malefactor to the judge, as Achan to Joshua, who assures himself of certain death, and looks for no favour; but as the sick man to the physician, that hath hope to be cured by him. And here our faith is surer a great deal.—*T. Watson*.

[15759] Right confession is the fruit of faith, since without faith there cannot be an adequate view of sin, nor of the way of pardon through Christ. David said, "I acknowledge my transgression;" and many a hardened and unbroken sinner has said the same. But David went on to say, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight;" and this is language which only faith would prompt. Daniel, in making confession, "set his face unto the Lord his God," and acknowledged the Divine majesty, and goodness, and righteousness (Dan.

ix. 3-7). Faith only can lead the soul to Christ, and draw the humbled heart to the precious blood. Confession has no virtue in itself. Children often confess their faults to escape punishment. It is only when mixed with faith that it can evidence real repentance and lead to pardon and peace.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

## II. ITS CONNECTION WITH PARDON, SPIRITUAL RECOVERY, AND GOOD WORKS.

[15760] Unclasp thy conscience before God, and show thy wounds unto Him, and of Him ask a medicine. Show them to Him that will not reproach but heal thee, for although thou hold thy peace He knoweth all.—*Chrysostom.*

[15761] The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works.—*Augustine.*

## III. NECESSITY OF CONFESSION OF SIN TO OUR BRETHREN AS WELL AS TO GOD WHEN OCCASION SO REQUIRES.

[15762] My brother may be hurt by me, though I have taken nothing from him, nor intended him injury. He may be scandalized by my sin, that is, tempted to sin, encouraged in his villainess, or discontented and made sorrowful for my unworthiness and transgression. We must therefore confess to them also; for when we acknowledge our folly, we affright them from it, and by repentance we give them caution that they may not descend into the same state of infelicity.—*Bp. Jeremy Taylor.*

[15763] The mutual confession of faults when needful is very important. As a means of reconciliation it is absolutely necessary. When differences exist between individuals or families, there is usually a great deal of wrong on both sides, and to set matters right there must be a mutual confession and yielding. Both parties are wrong to a greater or less extent, and both must confess their wrong. Without it peace cannot be made, or if made, it cannot be durable. It is only mutual confession and mutual forgiveness that can lay the foundation for a lasting reconciliation and enduring peace.—*The Christian Age.*

[15764] If a man's sins have been not only many, but notorious; if all the neighbourhood knows them; if he has denied them, or covered them, and yet not hid them, and they are known; and if he professes that he has changed, one of the fruits meet for repentance is that he should declare his transgression as publicly as that transgression has been known. If a man has lived a life of fraud, and has justly obtained a reputation for it; if a man has lived in ill temper, and has obtained a reputation for it; if a man has lived in immoralities, and has obtained a reputation for it, when he is called to join the people of God one of his duties is that of confession. He is not called to enter into any minute morbid details; but the public decla-

ration before the household of the Lord Jesus Christ that he has been guilty of the turpitudes and transgressions which have been alleged against him, and which have given him his bad reputation, is good for his soul, as well as the souls of others in the community. While, then, we are not to confess officially, and to the priest, as a matter of duty, though we may as a matter of liberty; while we are not to confess every flagrant act, and make that public which was not made public before; while we are to confess those sins which were in their nature public and notorious before, if we would have the mercy of God and charity with our fellow-men, we should live in the consciousness of our real moral condition, and our sinfulness and our sin should be freely confessed to God, and, so far as proper, to our fellow-men. A disposition that fairly looks in the face a man's real moral nature, and that so recognizes it that the heart does confess somewhere—in most cases to God, and in special cases, where it is required, to men—is enjoined by the Word of God.—*Ward Beecher.*

## IV. MAN'S NATURAL DISINCLINATION TO CONFESS SIN.

The mental and moral qualities which specially rebel against the acknowledgment of sin.

### (1) Reason.

[15765] Man's reason, suborned by his feelings, refuses to investigate. His reason returns to him false reports. His reason, unlike many dishonest officials who return overcharged bills, returns undercharged bills. If there be a transgression, and the man looks at it, it is *maximum*; but reason, suborned and acting under the influence of the feelings, returns *minimum*. Send out reason to inspect and bring in statistics of wrong. How seldom is it that a man's reason is true to its trust, and reports to him what he really is, and what is the magnitude of that which is wrong in him!—*Ibid.*

[15766] The bank is breaking away. A crawfish has pierced it. The stream is working, and working, and working. The engineer is sent up to see if all is safe. He sees that a stream is running through the bank, big as his finger. He looks at it, and waits to see if the stream enlarges. Soon it is as big as his two fingers. He waits a little longer, and it is as big as his hand. It is wearing on either side the opening, and the waters are beginning to find it out, and slowly they swirl on the inside towards this point. It will not be many hours before the bank will be so torn that it will give way, and the flood will pour through the *crevasse*. But the engineer goes back and says, "Well, there was a little rill there. But it was a very beautiful place: I never saw a prettier bank than that. The trees that grow in the neighbourhood are superb; and the shrubbery there is very fragrant and charming; and the moisture which finds its way



through the bank seems to nourish all vegetation near it." "Well, but the *break*! How about that?" "It was something of a break; but, as I was saying, it is a beautiful spot. And right there is a fine plantation; and the man that owns it—" "But how about the *crevasse*?" "Yes, there was a little *crevasse*; but, as I was saying, all things conspire to make it a lovely scene." What kind of a report is that, of an engineer sent out to investigate, when it is a question of impending ruin? What kind of a report is that, when the elements are at work which will soon launch desolation on the neighbourhood? Send the engineer Reason into a man's soul, and ask it to report concerning the habit of drinking in the man. It comes back and says, "Oh! well, he takes a little for the oft infirmities of his stomach; but he is a good fellow, he is a strong man, and his heart is in the right place." "But what about his *habit*?" "He takes a little now and then; but, as I was saying, he is a generous fellow. If you had heard of his kindnesses to that family when they were in distress—" "But what about his *habit*?" "There is a little trickling occasionally; but, as I was saying, he is a noble man. I was very much pleased with his conversation. He is a man that has many excellent things about him." So Reason, like the engineer, comes back, putting the best face on things, and telling the most plausible story, hiding, palliating, deceiving. And one of the things that a man must do before he can confess, is to train his understanding to make a fair, clean, white report on the state of facts.—*Ibid.*

## (2) *Conscience.*

[15767] Even conscience joins in this bad confederacy of evil within. For, how many times are men ready to confess their wrong before God, when conscience says, "Stop! stop! insincere hypocrite, stop! Did you not confess your wrong once before? and twice? and thrice? and did you not go and commit the same offence again? If you go to God now, will it not be a mockery? Do not you know that if you confess it, you will do it again? Do not you know that you have cherished bitter malign thoughts, and that you have given expression to them? Do not you know you did it last week, and then went and cried about it, and made confession before God? Do not you know that you blasted your neighbour's reputation, and tattled concerning him, and rolled hatred as a sweet morsel under your tongue, and shot venomous arrows that hit everybody within your reach? Now your conscience is stirred up, and you want to go to God, and get on your knees, and confess your sins, and ask God to help you to overcome your malign disposition. Do not you know perfectly well that you will repeat the wrong? and what is the use of making a hypocrite of yourself?" And so conscience joins this army of bad lawyers in the soul, and says to the soul, "Do not confess your sins."—*Ibid.*

## (3) *Worldly prudence.*

[15768] Worldly prudence says, "Let well enough alone; try to do as well as you can in the time to come; but as to the past, do not meddle with that." "Ah!" says worldly prudence to men, when they attempt to confess their sins to God, "do not meddle with nostrums. If you are sick, live better, live under the control of better laws, and do not tamper with remedies that will only exacerbate your symptoms, and bring on a worse state of things."—*Ibid.*

## (4) *Pride.*

[15769] Do not many of you know some persons whose pride is of such a nature that when they do a thing, they think their doing it is evidence that it is right? Once let a person do a thing and it is the "I" of a god. *I* did it, and therefore it is right—therefore it is not wrong. Pride tends to make people think that a thing is right, by its own peculiar nature. When reason admits that a thing is wrong, pride is unwilling to admit it. Do you not know a great many proud men? They assert a thing in the morning that is notoriously incorrect; they are expostulated with by the one at the other end of the table (whom God set to correct the faults of men), and they deny but that they are right; and yet in the course of the day it comes out that they are wrong. How many men under such circumstances can go back in the evening, and say quietly, "The thing that I said in the morning, on further knowledge, I found to be incorrect—I was wrong"? A man does a thing that is hard and oppressive, and declares that it is not wrong; and yet upon after reflection he finds that it was wrong. Have you never seen proud men who in cases like this utterly refused to admit that they did wrong? Such men will, however, attempt to make it up by extra kindnesses in other things. A proud man has crushed some one's feelings. If he is a tender-hearted man, it may be that he will confess, although it is more likely that he will not. But you may expect to have a good time for a week afterwards! He will try to make compensation, as it were, for the wrong he has done you, but he will not confess. Why, the mouth of pride has the lock-jaw when it is a question of confessing wrong! And so there is this battle with pride. As the understanding has to be subdued by simple honesty and truthfulness, there is this battle of life with men in the matter of pride, which has to be subdued; so that, when a man has done wrong, pride itself shall show, by all that is right and becoming in manhood, that the wrong must have its right name put upon it, and that there must be a confession to God of it.—*Ibid.*

[15770] Men are too facile in confessing their sinfulness, and yet obstinate in not confessing their sins. One reason why men do not willingly recognize and confess sin as an individual act is, that they cannot endure to stand before their fellows as culprits, either in their

own thoughts, or in the reflected opinions of their neighbours. If sin, even the wickedest and meanest, were only to become common and allowable and fashionable, then men would confess what now they deny; because then the confession would not mark them out as sinners above others. They sin in companies so large and respectable that they are not ashamed, inasmuch as men's consciences are, in fact, made up more largely of the rules which govern them—of the opinions of society—than of absolute moral standpoints and laws.—*Ibid.*

### (5) *Vanity.*

[15771] When men have done wrong they instantly say, "Does anybody know it?" If it is not known, they are much disturbed; but if men do know it, the question is, "What do they think? What is the impression in the community? What do my friends think?" Vanity teaches men to be more thoughtful of the opinions of their fellow-men than of the opinions of God Himself. And there is a lack of confession in many persons whose conscience would lead them to confess, and whose reason would, perhaps, help them to confess, because there stands vanity, which is wounded so easily, and by so many imaginary things, that they are utterly unwilling to have that which is imperfect in them supposed to be imperfect by others, and are for ever resorting to guises and deceptions to hide their faults.—*Ibid.*

[15772] Ah! Is there anything like vanity? Yes, you see it in the world. Does not God create woman bountifully beautiful, adorned most when unadorned? And yet, is it not the study of fashion to make woman execrable in everything that belongs really to taste? Is it not the study of fashion to disfigure her foot, to abominably disfigure her waist, and to make her head a walking laughing-stock? Is it not the supreme study of fashion to make the wardrobe hate that which is comely, and disfigure that which is beautiful? Fashion is a supreme ass! It is stupid—ineffably stupid. It is hateful, because in the kingdom of beauty, whatever mars beauty is hateful. It is continually marring and disfiguring beauty. By way of illustration, that which fashion is doing outside, vanity is doing inside. It makes homely that which God made beautiful. It distorts that which God made symmetrical. It renders uncomely everything that God made comely. Inside it is dressing the heart for all the world just as outside fashion is dressing the body. And can anything be more ridiculous than that? When men have done wrong, and they attempt to confess, here sits vanity obstinately refusing to help. It is to be fought and subdued before one who has sinned can confess before God simply and truly.—*Ibid.*

### V. THE SATISFACTION AND COMFORT OF THIS PRACTICE.

[15773] Some of the highest and most noble experiences that men have in this world are

those that they have when they have overcome a wrong, clearly, avowedly, and are conscious in their whole being that they stand beyond it; when they have confessed it to God and forsaken it; when they have gained a victory over their own disposition. A victory inside of us is ten thousand times more glorious than any victory that can be outside of us. It is declared that "a man that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." A man that subdues himself is better than a man that subdues empires to himself.—*Ibid.*

[15774] Do not tell me that confession is all a degrading thing. Do not tell me that it is all a painful thing. It is painful as long as you strive against it; it is rendered painful by many of the lacerations of expiation; but, after all, through confession of sin and renunciation we come to an atmosphere in which we breathe the very breath of heaven itself. No one who has done wrong can feel so happy as he who has come out of it, and has not covered it up, but has forsaken it, and confessed it, and risen beyond it. That is the royal way.—*Ibid.*

[15775] The fathers and early Christian writers have some sweet and assuring words upon this head. "Open confession," says Tertullian, "is good for the soul." "Go," writes St. Bernard, "and confess to thy God all thy tribulations; His ear is open to thee, and His comforts shall refresh thy heart." Gregory briefly puts the same thought: "The tears of confession bring comfort."—*Anon.*

[15776] As a man who hath money to pay is loath to part with it, when it is once paid, he is glad that it is discharged; even so men, before they confess their sins, are unwilling to disburden themselves of them; but when confession is once made, they have eased their hearts, and find such comfort as they could not before conceive.—*D. Cawdrey.*

### VI. THE RUIN INVOLVED IN ITS NEGLECT.

[15777] The man that falls into the sea or a river, so long as the water does not reach his mouth does not perish, because he is not suffocated by it, but when it covers his mouth, and he cannot breathe, then he perishes, for his life depends on his breath. So as long as sin closes the mouth of the sinner, and he does not confess his own sin to his God, he then must cease to breathe the vital air of salvation, and be dead before God.—*Augustine.*

### VII. REASONS FOR THIS DUTY DURING THE WHOLE COURSE OF THIS PRESENT LIFE.

[15778] 1. Because sin is an unspeakable evil. 2. Because our various infirmities, our defects of judgment, our frequent ignorance of the motives and characters of our fellow-men, and the relatively wrong acts and feelings which originate in these sources, require an atonement as well as our wilful or voluntary sins.—*T. C. Upham, D.D.*

# VIII. DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND ON THE SUBJECT OF CONFESSION, AND ITS MARKED DISTINCTION FROM THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

## I The essential difference between the two doctrines, both as regards fundamental principles and nature.

(1) *The Church of England only advises confession under occasional circumstances, for exceptional need.*

[15779] It may be thought that, explain our Church of England doctrine in this matter of confession as we may, it is not *fundamentally* different from that of the Church of Rome. The Roman Church, it may be said, recommends regular confession to a priest at stated intervals; the English Church recommends occasional confession under certain circumstances: here is not a difference of principle, but simply a question of more or less. Now I am bound to say, in the most emphatic manner, that Anglicanism, however it may be represented (or rather misrepresented), is *not* modified Romanism. The difference here as elsewhere is *fundamental*, and goes to the root of the question. . . . To admit confession as an *exception* is a totally different thing, in point of *principle*, with admitting it as a rule. Admitting anything under circumstances confessedly exceptional is virtually saying that the rule is *against* admitting it. If it were stated in a religious treatise that remaining in one place on Sunday was a proper method of observing the day, but that, seeing the Sabbath is made for man, and love supersedes the letter of the law, a physician might take a journey on that day to visit his patients, we should at once conclude from hence that Sunday travelling *generally* was unjustifiable, and to be avoided. View the resort to the priest, recommended under certain circumstances in our Communion Office, as a *bond fide* exception, and not as a loophole designed to let in the whole corrupt practice of Auricular Confession, and the minister then falls into his proper and legitimate place.—*Dean Goulburn*.

(2) *The Church of England regards the Christian minister as one well fitted to comfort and advise, but in no sense as a judge and arbiter of conscience.*

[15780] Where a burdened, perplexed, or weak conscience needs counsel and sympathy, it is both reasonable and scriptural that it should communicate its state to some Christian friend—the more experienced and the more advanced the better. It is doubly satisfactory and appropriate that this friend should be invested with the responsibilities and authority of the Christian ministry. A lack of such communications between private Christians, and between the pastor and his flock, deprives us of much of that sympathy and help from one another's prayers which we might enjoy, if we more freely and unreservedly resorted to them.

We can, and dare go no further. This is the extreme point to which Scripture and our Church conduct us. Whatever is really demanded by a longing after sympathy, an inward affiance to truth, and a desire for the efficiency of the Christian ministry, may be had upon our own ground; and yet we are as far as ever from the Confessional.—*Ibid*.

[15781] The Confessional is based altogether upon a different principle, the principle that the priest is a judge of the conscience. Observe the difference of idea between a spiritual counsellor and a judge. To the spiritual counsellor we tender our confession voluntarily; the judge extracts it from us by the examination of evidence. We are criminals at his bar; and he takes our consciences as a witness against ourselves, and adjures them to try the cause well and truly. Then he proceeds to elicit the truth by questioning, and with the evidence thus gained before him he gives his judgment rather than his advice.—*Ibid*.

[15782] This terrific judgment of the individual conscience is all to be; it is waiting for each one of us in the womb of futurity as surely as there is a God in heaven; but the time is not yet come, nor the Man. Suffice it that the Day of Assize is hastening on, and that the Man has even now set forth on His second visit to this old weather-beaten planet, and is coming in the clouds of heaven. Let us, His sinful ministers, in the narrowness of our understandings, and in the narrowness of our sympathies, take heed that we judge nothing before the time. Let us leave to Him to bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and to make manifest the counsels of the hearts. "God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world by that Man whom He hath ordained." Yes, by that Man. But I know not any other man who is ordained to judge. We will gladly be your burden-bearers for Jesus' sake, so far as God shall give us wisdom and grace to become so; but your judges we will never be. And should you attempt to make us judges we will not treat with you at all on those terms, but lifting you up, and placing you on the same level with ourselves, we will address you, as He who was first entrusted with the power of the keys addressed a certain devout Gentile who prostrated himself before Him: "Stand up, I myself also am a Man."—*Ibid*.

(3) *The Church of England recognizes confession as helpful and salutary only when it is practised according to her own scriptural teaching.*

[15783] Latimer, Cranmer, Ridley, Hooker, and Taylor, all recognize the species of confession recommended in our Communion Office; and the first of them, after declaiming in the strong terms usual to him against the Auricular Confession of the Papists, says of "the right and true Confession" (as he calls it): "I would to God it were kept in England; for it is a good thing."—*Ibid*.



**2 Practical applications.**

[15784] In tracing the false principles of the Church of Rome, it is with no feelings of triumph that we of the Church of England need speak of our differences with her. Our *theory*, no doubt, is pure, rational, and scriptural (would that we all felt how pure, rational, and scriptural it is!); but what shall we say, in the court of conscience, of our practice? Are we not, perhaps, in our Pharisaical highmindedness, looking down upon some poor devout Romanist, who is earnestly struggling on a false system after that personal spiritual discipline, which we will not even seek on a sound one? "Each man's conscience, under the administration of the Spirit of Christ, is the safest guide for him." Doubtless, doubtless, doubtless. But are you, who refuse so confidently the guidance of a priest, guiding yourself thus? Is self-discipline (carried on by close self-examination, by earnest prayer, by self-application of God's word in meditation upon it, by constant communion with your own heart in the privacy of your chamber) an element in your religion at all? Or is there nothing at all personal in your religion, nothing that might not be the religion of another man quite as well as your own? Does it consist merely of *general* confessions of sin which mean nothing, of a series of ordinances respectfully attended, and of good impressions occasionally received on Sunday, which, having flattered you into a conceit of your own goodness, are obliterated by the pursuits of the ensuing week, just as marks on the sand are effaced by the stealthy rising tide.—*Ibid.*

[15785] Boasting that the Priest to whom you resort is a Heavenly One, "after the order of Melchizedek," do you really resort to Him day after day with the special burdens which lie upon your conscience, and having laid them down at His feet in penitence and faith, do you rise refreshed by His absolving word in your conscience, more energetically to do battle with those faults of character and conduct which may indeed be patent to the world around us, but which, until a devout self-examination brings them to light, very often lie hid from their possessors?—*Ibid.*

[15786] Our system, not as it exists in theory, but as it is administered in practice, wants something both of definite guidance for the conscience and of sympathy with the fallen. . . . Let us hate with a just hatred that spirit of worldly indifferentism, which, while it pays a certain amount of formal homage to Christianity, resents the idea that every thought is to be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. . . . Let us endeavour to remedy those defects in the working of our system, which first set some of its administrators upon the plan of introducing among us the Confessional. Let us, the ministers, preach less vaguely, with more of definite point and aim, seeking not merely to produce good impressions, but to guide souls in

their pilgrimage to heaven. Let the *voluntary* confession of a burdened or perplexed conscience, which really longs for and is relieved by it, be no longer . . . hooted out of court, but admitted as reasonable, orthodox, and scriptural. . . . Above all, let Christians be more unreserved with one another, and seek to bear one another's burdens by sympathy and intercessory prayer. Cherish an interest in the spiritual state of others, and let the freezing reserve which guards your own inner life thaw a little occasionally beneath the kindness of an intimate and confidential friend. And then we shall soon see an end of the Confessional, with all its falsely claimed prerogatives; it will die away and drop off of itself, like an autumnal leaf, when the instincts which seem to call for it (the desire to be true, and the desire for sympathy) have been fully met and satisfied by a pure, rational, and Scriptural system.—*Ibid.*

**REPENTANCE.****I. USE AND MEANING OF THE TERM IN THE BIBLE.**

[15787] In the New Testament there are two Greek verbs, which are alike rendered in our translation by the English word "repent." These are *μεταμέλομαι* and *μετανοέω*. Corresponding to these are two nouns, *μεταμέλεια* and *μετάνοια*. Of these, the latter only is found in the New Testament; but both the verbs are of frequent occurrence. Of these words, Schleusner says: "Quæ voces indifferenter apud auctores præstantissimos ponuntur." And he refers to the Glossaries of Hesychius and Suidas. In this, Scapula and other lexicographers agree. But although both words are thus used indiscriminately, there is a difference in their strict etymological import which is deserving of attention, and which may be discerned in some of their respective uses. *Μέλει* signifies properly *curæ est*, it is cause or matter of concern; *μέλομαι, curo, curam gero*, I am concerned, I feel concern. *Νοέω*, from *νόος* or *νοῦς*, *mens, animus*, signifies *mente agito, in animo verso, cogito*. Were the termination *νοια*, so common in composition, taken by itself in the usage of the language, it would consequently mean the exercise of mind, thought. I conceive the strict and proper meaning of *μετά* to be after, when in composition with either of these verbs. I do not enter at present into either the etymological or the inferential niceties of its meaning. *Μετάνοια* would thus mean after-thought, and *μεταμέλεια* after-concern. But in the *usus loquendi*, words very generally, in the history of every language, come to signify something more than their simple etymological meaning; something that is implied or inferred, coming to form a part of the import, as much as the original or etymological sense. After-thought does not, for example, necessarily express change of mind or sentiment, inasmuch

as second thoughts, or after-reflection, might only serve to confirm the mind in its former position. But most frequently, when we hear of an after-thought, we associate with it the idea of change; so that after-thought comes to mean much the same as change of mind. It is not difficult, however, to see the principle on which both the words came to be used interchangeably for repentance. A change of mind, from wrong to right, naturally implies concern for the former, considered as involving sin; and, on the other hand, such after-concern evidently implies such a change of mind.—*R. Wardlaw.*

[15788] Repentance (*μετάνοια*), literally, is *after-knowledge*; and then it signifies the change of mind consequent on this after-knowledge; and, next, regret for the course pursued resulting from the change of mind consequent on this after-knowledge; and, last of all, change of conduct springing from all this. This change of mind and of action may be for the worse as well as for the better, but in Scripture usage implies the latter.—*Abp. Trench.*

[15789] The word *μετάνοια* involves the idea of *repentance*, *penitence*, or true *penance*; but its starting-point is farther back. It involves, too, the idea of *reformation*, but it flashes light upon the mental process by which moral reformation is reached.—*Jas. Morrison.*

## II. DEFINITION AND NATURE OF REPENTANCE.

[15790] Repentance is that sorrow of mind which arises from a sense of sins committed, and of a vicious habit contracted by customary sinning, as also from a conviction of guilt and fear of punishment, and which produces a desire of deliverance, a serious endeavour after a better change of life, and an observance to all the Divine commandments.—*P. Limborch.*

[15791] After all that has been written on the subject, I am not sure that a juster and more comprehensive definition or description of repentance unto life can be given than this:—"Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after new obedience." (Assembly's Shorter Catechism, Quest. 87.) This is complete. It is of special importance to observe the necessity of a true sense of sin being associated with the apprehension of mercy. The former by itself would engender despair, would "work death." The latter without the former, could it subsist, would inspire presumption. It is the union of the two that produces true repentance, repentance unto life.—*R. Wardlaw.*

[15792] Repentance is either *internal* or *external*. The first has reference to God alone, and involves that compunction of heart when "there ariseth a pensive and corrosive desire

that we had done otherwise; a desire which suffereth us to foreslow no time, to feel no quietness within ourselves, to take neither sleep nor food with contentment, never to give over supplications, confessions, and other penitent duties, till the light of God's reconciled favour shine in our darkened soul. It is of an external character when satisfaction is made to others for any wrong done. The former is termed the virtue, the latter the discipline of repentance.—*Hooker.*

[15793] It is an absolute change of the whole man in purpose of heart and turning him to God and godliness, from his former courses and wicked life; so that it hath four things in it: first, it is a change of a man. Secondly, it is a change of the whole man. Thirdly, it is such a change as turneth him in purpose of heart from all sins. Fourthly, such a change as turneth a man from all sins unto God.—*J. Smith.*

[15794] True repentance is the gift of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, and may be defined to be that mighty change in mind and heart respecting God's holiness, and respecting sin as opposed to that attribute, leading to a corresponding change in life.—*C. N.*

[15795] What is it to repent? First, *Stop*—stop doing wrong. Second, *Turn round and look back*. This is the literal meaning of the word, "a look behind," an "after view." Hence arises the pain, the emotional part of repentance, resultant on this backward look at errors and sins. Third, *Go back*—to the very spot where we are now conscious we began to wander from God, or to entertain false views of His rule over our destinies. Put it all in one word. "I repent" equals "I change my mind." The cry for forgiveness then becomes easy, natural, necessary.—*E. J. Haynes.*

## III. ITS DIVINE SOURCE.

[15796] The Scriptural doctrine in regard to repentance is not that a man must repent in order to his being qualified to go to Christ; it is rather, that he must go to Christ in order to his being able to repent. From Him comes the grace of contrition as well as the cleansing of expiation.—*H. Melvill, B.D.*

[15797] It is God that gives repentance, as well as He gives pardon. For He, and He only, is the giver of all grace; and repentance is the gift of sanctifying grace, as pardon is of justifying.—*J. Lightfoot.*

[15798] Repentance is not in our power, it is a gift, a work of God, so that we cannot repent when we will, but when God will; therefore it must be our care to take repentance when God proffers it, and wills it.—*J. Smith.*

[15799] If you take other metal than iron, the loadstone will not stir it; but turn the metal into iron, and it will follow the loadstone; so,

let the hearts of men continue in that condition wherein they are by nature, and they will never take Christ, they will never accept Him; but when God puts into them such a strong and impetuous instigation and disposition, as that of the Spouse in the Canticles, that had no rest till she had found her Beloved, then they will take Christ upon His own conditions.—*J. Preston.*

#### IV. ITS SPHERE AND OBJECTS.

[15800] Every change of mind from wrong to right, in a moral agent, attended with a consciousness of personal responsibility, is repentance, whatever the act or habit may be that is changed. Our mental acts, as well as our physical acts, may be objects of repentance. Thought is mental action, and the right conduct of the mind, in deliberate thinking, is the most important sphere of our moral responsibility and self-correction, inasmuch as our outward life is regulated from within.—*P. Strutt.*

#### V. ITS CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS.

##### 1 Conviction of sin.

###### (1) *Nature and purpose of this conviction.*

[15801] The Spirit convinces us of the *fact* of sin, that we have done so and so; of the *fault* of sin, that we have done ill in doing so; of the *folly* of sin, that we have acted against right reason, and our true interest; of the *filth* of sin, that by it we are become odious to God; of the *fountain* of sin, the corrupt nature; and, lastly, of the *fruit* of sin, that the end thereof is death.—*Matthew Henry.*

###### (2) *Its legal and evangelical convictions contrasted.*

[15802] Legal convictions arise chiefly from a view of God's justice; evangelical, of His goodness; legal from the dread of His power, evangelical from a view of His holiness; legal convictions harden the heart and drive from God, evangelical soften and lead to Christ; legal conviction is most concerned for the anguish of the spirit, evangelical for the sin of the soul; legal sorrow is glad to snatch at comfort from any source, however false; evangelical sorrow cares for no peace which is not brought from the word of God; legal sorrow is transitory, evangelical is abiding; the one seeks freedom from pain, the other from sin; the first regards the consequences of sin, the other the principle of sin.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

##### 2 Genuine sorrow for sin.

###### (1) *Its nature.*

[15803] The first element in true repentance is a genuine sorrow towards God—in other words, an inward grief, because we have not only broken His laws, and thus made ourselves unhappy, but have returned His benefits with the basest ingratitude.—*Anon.*

[15804] It is grief for the whole sinful and

guilty state, for separation from God. Nay, this grief at separation from God, at being in the far country without God, may come upon us without any single sin more than another burdening the conscience; as Luther in his day, without having to confess any single sin, uttered the lament, "My sin! my sin!" and did so in the feeling that on the whole it was ill with him, and that he was under the wrath of God. In repentance a man willingly submits to judgment, while judging himself likewise; and willingly submits to the rebuke of God's Spirit, while likewise accusing himself.—*Martensen.*

[15805] There may be the most bitter and tormenting sense of guilt without any real godly repentance for it. The heart of stone may be crushed and remain stone in its every fragment; it can only be melted when the love of God is suffered to shine on it.—*N. Ker.*

[15806] Take a man who is touched with the sense of his sins, whose heart is broken, who hath an apprehension of God's wrath, and of his own unworthiness, such a man now will be satisfied with nothing in the world but the assurance of God's love and His favour. As you see in natural things, let a man be very weary, the daintiest meat in the world whatsoever you give him, will not help him; but he must have that which is fit for that particular defect; nothing will help him but rest. Again, let a man be hungry, and faint for want of meat, all the music, the best air, or whatsoever you can give him, will do him no good, it must be meat that must help him. If a man have a disease, it is not sleep, it is not meat and drink, it must be a medicine that is fit for his disease. So it is with the heart of man, when his heart is so broken, so humbled and touched with the sense of his sins, that he longs after nothing but remission, nothing but the assurance of God's favour, the assurance of His love and kindness—nothing will satisfy him but that.—*J. Preston.*

[15807] "Mine iniquities are gone over my head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me" (Psa. xxxviii. 4). It is a sure sign that a man is awakened out of his sleep when he discovers the error of his dream. In the drawing up of water out of a deep well, so long as the bucket is under water, we feel not the weight of it; but as soon as it comes above water it begins to hang heavy on the hand. When a man dives under water he feels no weight of the water, though there may be many tons of it over his head; whereas a tub half full of the same water, taken out of the river, and set upon the same man's head, would be very burdensome to him, and make him soon grow weary of it. In like manner, so long as a man is over head in sin, he is not sensible of the weight of sin, it is not troublesome to him; but when he begins once to come out of that state of sin wherein he lay and lived before, then beginneth sin to hang heavy upon him,



and he groans under the weight thereof. So long as sin is in the will, the proper seat of sin, a man feels not the weight of it, but, like a fool, it is sport and pastime to him to do evil. It is therefore a good sign that sin is removed out of its seat, out of its chair of state, when it begins to be burdensome to us; and such a sense of sin may well be considered as an entrance into a state of grace.—*C. H. Bogatzky.*

(2) *Its necessity.*

Want of sorrow for sin is a greater proof of want of love than the sin itself.

[15808] When a father or a husband hath anything committed against them by a child or a wife, if they shall withdraw themselves and profess themselves displeased, and yet the child or the wife, in the meantime, be never troubled at this, but be at rest, well enough content it should be so, and are not disquieted for it, will not the parent or husband take this exceeding ill at their hands when he seeth his displeasure slighted? For this is much greater than the offence itself. So I may say, whatsoever the sin be that you have committed, this hardness of heart, this negligence after the sin is committed, when you are not disquieted for it, when your hearts are not troubled for it, it is a greater sign of want of love to the Lord, it is a greater sign of an evil and untoward disposition than the sin itself.—*J. Preston.*

(3) *Its measure.*

[15809] It is not so much the muchness and measure of sorrow as the truth and heartiness which fits us for the promises and comforts of mercy. Though I must say this also: "He that thinks he hath sorrowed enough for his sins never sorrowed savingly."—*R. Bolton.*

[15810] The least hair makes the eye weep; the least sin makes the heart smite. David's heart smote him when he cut off the lap of King Saul's garment. What would it have done if he had cut off his head?—*T. Watson.*

[15811] The slightest sorrow for sin is sufficient, if it produces amendment; and the greatest is insufficient if it does not.—*Caleb Colton.*

[15812] A true mourner labours that his repentance may be as eminent as his sin is transcendent.—*T. Watson.*

(4) *Its intensity when real.*

[15813] Sin being the greatest evil craves the greatest sorrow. The precepts and examples in the Scripture show as much.—*Dyke.*

[15814] Greatness of grief may be measured either by the violent intention or by the constant continuance and duration. Now that which is wanting to the grief of God's children for their sins the former way is recompensed and made up in the latter.—*Ibid.*

[15815] Grief is founded in love. According as our love is, so is our grief. But our love of

God and His favour is the greatest love, and therefore our grief for His offence by sin the greatest grief.—*Ibid.*

(5) *Its preciousness in the sight of God.*

[15816] Tears wash away sin; rain melts and washeth away a ball of snow; repenting tears wash away sin. That sin, saith Ambrose, which cannot be defended by argument may be washed away by tears.—*T. Watson.*

[15817] If thou canst not weep for sin, canst thou grieve? Intellectual mourning is best; there may be sorrow where there are no tears; the vessel may be full though it wants vent; it is not so much the weeping eye God respects as the broken heart; yet I would be loth to stop their tears who can weep. God stood looking on Hezekiah's tears (Isa. xxxviii. 5): "I have seen thy tears." David's tears made music in God's ears (Psa. vi. 8): "The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping." 'Tis a sight fit for angels to behold, tears as pearls dropping from a penitent eye.—*Ibid.*

[15818] Tears dropping from a mournful, penitent eye are like the water dropping from the roses, very sweet and precious to God; a fountain in the garden makes it pleasant; that heart is most delightful to God which hath a fountain of sorrow running in it. Mary stood at Christ's feet weeping (Luke vii. 38). Her tears were more fragrant and odoriferous than her ointment; the incense when it is broken smells sweetest; when the heart is broken for sin, now our services give forth their sweetest perfume. "There is joy in heaven over a sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv. 7). Whereupon St. Bernard calls tears *vinum angelorum*, the wine of angels; and sure God delights much in tears, else He would not keep a bottle for them (Psa. lvi. 8). One calls tears *holocaustum pingue*, a fat sacrifice, which under the Law was most acceptable (Lev. iii. 3). St. Hierom calls mourning a plank after shipwreck; Chrysostom calls tears a sponge to wipe off sin; tears are powerful orators for mercy. Eusebius saith there was an altar at Athens on which they poured no other sacrifice but tears; as if the heathens thought there was no better way to pacify their angry gods than by weeping. Jacob wept, and had power over the angel (Hosea xii. 4). Tears melt the heart of God.—*Ibid.*

[15819] Sorrow for sin is the only sorrow which benefits. He who sorrows for the loss of riches does not repair his loss. He who sorrows for the departed does not raise the dead. He who sorrows for sickness not only does not recover thereby, but even increases the disease. But he who sorrows for sin, and he alone, is benefited by his sorrow.—*Chrysostom.*

(6) *Counsel respecting sorrow for sin.*

It must be wisely, moderate, yet effectually sincere and permanent.

[15820] The great<sup>st</sup> end of repentance is amendment; and the first thing needed, in

order to produce a true repentance, is an adequate perception of the nature of the errors to be amended. The questions relating to the guilt of such errors, to the grief to be felt on account of them, and to the atonement to be made for them, can only be properly dealt with by us when we are able clearly to see the nature of the evil which we have to correct. To know the disease is half the cure; and, in order to know it, we must, as much as possible, quiet our emotional excitement and look the evil in the face. If we weep too much, we shall find our tears blinding us just at the very moment when we want to see most clearly. "Make me to know my transgression and my sin" is one of the most important prayers we can take to God; and, in waiting for the answer to our prayer, we have need to preserve our minds in a calm and receptive state.—*P. Strutt*.

[15821] How soon are our tears dried up! If this plaster of sorrow begin to smart a little, presently we pluck it off, and think it is enough; whereas we should let it lie on till the sore be thoroughly healed, which is not till death, when as all tears, and so these of godly sorrow, shall be wiped away.—*Dyke*.

### 3 Abhorrence of sin.

#### (1) *Its nature and significance.*

[15822] To abhor evil is to have it in a moral detestation; to shrink back from it with a shuddering horror, as one would shrink back from a hissing, stinging serpent, which of a sudden lifted itself up in his path; for it is this shuddering horror that our word implies; which, strong as it is, is certainly not a whit stronger than the word of the original.—*Abp. Trench*.

[15823] What is it to abhor it? It must consist in—(1) Our own settled judgment that it is evil. (2) A hatred of it for its own sake (*Psa. cxix. 113*). (3) An aversion from it (*Ezek. xxxiii. 11*).—*Bp. Beveridge*.

[15824] Abhorrence is a state of feeling in the presence of which a man experiences both disgust and fear, and which indicates instant separation, revulsion, and self-defence, as in the case of some great over-mastering feeling that will not admit of parleying. It is a state of mind which carries them away from evil without waiting to reason about it, to measure it, or to have anything to do with it.—*Ward Beecher*.

[15825] Those evils which by the experience of generations have been found to be deadly and destructive, we are to abhor: not little peccadilloes; not minor evils, that may be ranked under the head of infirmities; not evils which are incident to helpless ignorance and feebleness, but those great staple wickednesses which spring out of those boiling caldrons; the passions, of which the world has had for two thousand years ample opportunity to judge, and which have been pronounced by the judgment of men everywhere, from the earliest to the latest day, to be mischiefs of which we should stand in such

horror, that we should refuse to reason about them, or to have anything to do with them, and should repel and reject them, first, forthwith, and for ever.—*Ibid*.

[15826] There are certain forms of aversion to given physical substances about us. The word "poison" on a label is enough to make us turn from it instantly, without tampering. So it is with dangerous animals. Men do not stop to admire the outward beauty of the leopard, the snake, or the spider. They have a very short process of dealing with them. So there are things in society that carry such a shock with them that one is driven from their presence. Lying, treachery, cruelty, lust, avarice, are always hateful, and men turn in repugnance from them. Their very appearance excites instant revulsion. So men, all the way up, have a kind of training which is calculated to accumulate in them a self-acting artillery. Men have arranged it so that where there are pistol-guarded windows, the pistol stands ready to be discharged; and if the burglar undertakes to pull up the sash, no sooner has he touched it than the watchful, waiting, self-defending pistol goes off; and men are to have such an abhorrence of great staple wickedness, that it will be a great spring gun that waits for some one to pull the trigger to make it go off. There is a discharging power in the mind by which it strikes and drives away that which is dangerous or repulsive.—*Ibid*.

#### (2) *Its evidences.*

##### a. A bold, determined stand against evil.

[15827] There does come a time when we are no longer allowed to be on a debatable ground. We must be a king's man or a commonwealth man; we must be on the side of vice or virtue; we must be either for God or for the devil. Politeness is a very nice thing, but strong earnestness is much better. When that time comes we must not be afraid of offending; no temporizing will do any good; we must declare our opinions firmly and faithfully; and if people like to say that we are prejudiced, and have antagonisms and antipathies, let them say so. We need not be ashamed of confessing, even in this day of small things, this hour of negation, this period of the fusion and confusion of creeds, that we are antagonistic to all that is not good, and have a very decided antipathy to things hurtful, and especially to the devil's regiment of the line, whether a man holds a commission in that corps, or serves in it merely as full private.—*Anon*.

##### b. A righteous indignation, and holy anger against evil.

[15828] When a man who knows better, lies to our face, lies deliberately, and lies persistently; when a man in a position of great trust, and who ought never even to have felt a temptation to dishonesty, is proved to have been guilty of elaborate fraud, of fraud extending through many years, during which he was affecting to

be chivalrously honourable; when cruel suffering is inflicted on our presence on the weak and the defenceless—then the fury long suppressed blazes out. No words are fierce enough to express our passionate indignation, and for a moment, or for an hour, we know something of what it is for wrath to be kindled against sin. The feeling is a right one. We are angry, and sin not. We should sin if we were not angry. We sin because we are not angry in this way oftener. Anger provoked by moral evil is a just and noble emotion. It is the attribute of the strongest and most generous natures. Both in the Old Testament and the New it is very frequently ascribed to God, and the revelation of God in Christ would have been incomplete if the indignation of Christ had never been provoked by the sins of men.—*R. W. Dale.*

[15829] To be a sin-hater implies two things.

1. To look upon sin as the most deadly evil—a complicated evil; it looks more ghastly than death or hell. 2. To be implacably incensed against it, a sin-hater will never admit of any terms of peace; the war between him and sin is like the war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. "There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days" (1 Kings xiv. 30). Anger may be reconciled, hatred cannot; true mourning begins in the love of God, and ends in the hatred of sin.—*T. Watson.*

[15830] To one who truly repents, sin looks like a very different thing from what it does to him who has not repented. Instead of looking like a thing that is desirable or fascinating, it looks the very opposite, most odious and detestable, and he is astonished at himself that he ever could have desired such a thing. Impenitent sinners may look at sin and see that it will ruin them, because God will punish them for it; but, after all, it appears in itself desirable; they love it; they roll it under their tongue. If it could end in happiness, they never would think of abandoning it. But to the other it is different: he looks at his own conduct as perfectly hateful. He looks back upon it, and exclaims, "How hateful, how detestable, how worthy of hell, such and such a thing was in me!"—*C. G. Finney.*

[15831] Witness (1) Jacob's indignation, unabated after forty years, on account of the cruel and treacherous murder of the Shechemites by Simeon and Levi (Gen. xlix. 6); (2) Lot's vexation of spirit at the mode of life of the dwellers in the cities of the plain (2 Peter ii. 8); (3) David's utterances in Psalm ci. 3, cxxxix. 21, cxix. 113, 158; (4) the conduct of Asa and Josiah (2 Chron. xv. 16; 2 Kings xxiii. 20); (5) and, above all, Christ's abhorrence of evil (Psa. xlv. 7; Heb. i. 9; Matt. xvi. 23; John ii. 13-17; Matt. xxi. 12, 13).—*Abp. Trench.*

[15832] Anger within certain limits is not inconsistent with love. Indeed, the measure of our love for others is often the measure of our anger against them when they do wrong. A

comparative stranger may tell us a lie, and we may feel nothing but contempt and disgust; but if our own child, or a friend for whom we have strong affection, tells us a lie, there is often intense anger as well as intense grief. That God should be angry with us though He loves us, is perfectly intelligible; and we may even find it possible to believe that His anger may at last become so great, that if it were revealed, the revelation would utterly consume and destroy us.—*Ibid.*

(3) *Its reasons and manner of its abhorrence.*

[15833] Why should we abhor sin? Because—1. It is contrary to God's nature. 2. Repugnant to His laws (John iii. 4). 3. Destructive to our own souls. The means of abhorring it: 1. Repent. 2. Consider the evil to be abhorred. 3. Remember that you are a Christian. 4. Avoid the occasions of sin (1 Thess. v. 22). 5. Think whom it displeases (Gen. xxxix. 9). Live always as under God's eye (Psa. cxxxix. 7). Remember the judgment.—*Bp. Beveridge.*

(4) *Its rarity.*

[15834] To a large extent men abhor the things that are repugnant to their selfishness; they abhor things that are opposed to their party spirit; but they do not abhor things which go deeper and are worse than either of these classes of things. Men do not find it any trouble at all to abhor a Jew, or a Roman Catholic, or a Democrat, if they are a Republican, or a Republican if they are Democrats. We abhor men who are more successful in business than we are, by such little ways as we do not know how to practise. But in the same relations men may be gluttonous, intemperate, cruel, crafty, and wicked; and we say, "Yes, they have some faults, I suppose."—*Ward Beecher.*

(5) *Necessity of thorough earnestness in this matter.*

[15835] If it be true that we are to avoid all contact with wickedness, we should avoid also those softening phrases which tend to alleviate the effects which ought to be produced by wickedness. There are certain words that have stored up in them the conscience of ages; which have been made to express the moral sense of the race; and when these words are laid aside, and others are substituted because they soften the appearance of things that are wrong, and smoothe them down, they work toward corruption. Let us go back to Saxon language when speaking of things on which society itself has put its brand, and call a robber a robber, a knave a knave. If we abhor evil, we should use words of abhorrence in describing it. If there were more plain speaking in the pulpit and out of it, men would be more afraid than they are of "speculating," and of "borrowing funds that they may speculate," and of being "unlucky." Men can get along with these terms; but "gambling" and "stealing," and "getting found out"—if these terms, which are the plain English of their conduct, were used all the



while, I think they would not allow themselves to be obfuscated and bewildered, and, indeed, destroyed.—*Ibid.*

[15836] You cannot become familiar with things evil without suffering damage. A man who, all the day long, is familiar with evil, under circumstances in which he is obliged to stir it, has not abhorrence enough to last, and he ceases to abhor; and though he may not himself fall into the exercise of the passions, because it takes more force to be wicked than he has, nevertheless it takes away from him the lustre and bloom and exquisite sensibility that belong to purity.—*Ibid.*

(6) *Points of self-examination serviceable for tests as to our attitude towards sin.*

[15837] In this age of feeble, languid Christianity, we do well to consider whether we enter into God's mind respecting sin, and have our whole moral and spiritual nature engaged in active and lively repugnance to it. To assist us in such an inquiry, the following points of self-examination will be serviceable:—(1) How fares it with us in regard to our temptations? (2) In what light do we regard old sins into which we have been betrayed? (3) In what language are we accustomed to talk of sin, and of the violation of God's law? (4) Is sin a burden to our souls?—*Abp. Trench.*

(7) *Questions raised.*

*a.* How far is abhorrence of evil consistent with the principle of charity?

[15838] It may be asked, "Is it not dangerous to introduce into the economy of the soul a principle that is so fatal as this is to charity, and that has in it such danger of conflagration at every action? Is it not in danger of filling the soul full of suspicions and hatreds?" It certainly is. It is like fire. Without fire civilization would cease. And yet many a man's house has been burned down by fire. It is true that abhorrence has a tendency to make a person hard of disposition; and often it is a violation of the teachings of the gospel, especially when it acts against persons, and not against things. But it is true, nevertheless, that we must have abhorrence in the soul, with all its risks and perils.—*Ibid.*

*b.* Can we hate the quality and not the person?

[15839] Men often say, "We hate the quality but not the person;" and there is a great deal of truth in that, but a great deal of falsity too. It is possible in many cases to separate the person from the deed; but there are times when you cannot do it, and must not: as when a man is the physical representative of a malign quality, carrying with him the abhorred feeling or disposition, as where evil so abides in a man that he is thoroughbred in wickedness. Can any man abhor the fang and not the serpent? We must not, for the sake of charity, evoke distinctions which violate common sense; and it is often necessary to let abhorrence sweep away

both the evil quality and the man who represents that quality.—*Ibid.*

#### 4 Renunciation of sin.

(1) *Its means.*

[15840] You want to find out a mode of renunciation that will be an escape from pain. I tell you there is no such escape possible except by perverting or mutilating one's nature.—*G. Eliot.*

(2) *Its abstinence from all "appearance" of evil.*

*a.* Significance of this abstinence.

[15841] Two separate meanings have been given to the direction, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. v. 22). (1) The word translated "appearance," *eidos*, may mean "external manifestation" or "semblance." (2) "Kind," "form," "species," or "sort," "a technical meaning," which, as Bishop Elliott says, "is supported by abundant lexical authority, and is exegetically clear and forcible." By the first rendering we should be forbidden to commit ourselves to any course of action that could be fairly construed as trenching on the forbidden territory of sin. By the second we should be cautioned to beware of the faintest forms of temptation; of those filmy sketches of evil presented to our imagination which when dwelt upon lead to the grossest deeds of sin. We may, however, justly combine both ideas, for he who sedulously and from the true fear of God guards the avenues of his soul from all flattering forms of sin, will at the same time not be regardless of the opinion of his fellow men on the moral quality of his life.—*James Foster.*

*b.* Its necessity.

[15842] It is true that many "who profess and call themselves Christians" take a proud stand on their independence of others, and say, "What care we for the opinion of others; if our conscience is right towards God are we in matters of conduct to be judged by the caprice of men or the weak consciences of ignorant or erring Christians?" A temper that would argue so is very far from the spirit of Christ, "who pleased not Himself," and is also full of the elements of spiritual danger, and of that "pride which goeth before destruction." Every Christly soul will readily grant that there are limiting circumstances arising from his "relations" to others that will modify his conduct, and restrain in some cases his personal independence of action.—*Ibid.*

*c.* The reasons upon which the observance of this rule is founded.

[15843] (1) The very appearance of evil voluntarily hazarded is incompatible with the Christian character. It is so as regards its (*a*) Purity—(*b*) Dignity—(*c*) Usefulness—(*d*) Safety—(*e*) Enjoyments. (2) No action can be acceptable to God which gives just offence to the moral sentiments of men. There are actions we may do, and scenes in which we may mingle, which, as

far as ourselves are concerned, are perfectly innocent, yet if they, by evident probability, throw a stumbling-block in a brother's way, should be carefully avoided by us. It is a solemn thing to "destroy" another man's soul through our carelessness, and yet this *may* be done. With what godly jealousy we should "ponder our steps," and carefully imbibe the spirit and instructions of the Divine word. Influences for good or evil stream out from us all around. *Churches and individuals* should be centres of holy influence, and it is not enough to be actively engaged in that which is good, we must also "hold off from" every "semblance" or "kind" of evil, or, as Tyndale says, "all suspicious things."—*Ibid.*

### (3) *Its advantages.*

[15844] As those that have ascended to the top of some Athos or Teneriffe see all things below them in the valleys small, and scarce in their diminution discernible, so shall all earthly objects, in thy spiritual exaltation, seem unto thee; either thou shalt not see them at all, or at least so lessened, as that they have to thee quite lost all the proportion of their former dimensions.—*Bp. Hall.*

## 5 Amendment of life in cleaving to the good.

### (1) *Nature and necessity of his duty.*

[15845] We all know how the ivy clings to the wall or to the tree, casts out innumerable little arms and tentacles by which it attaches and fastens itself to it, seeking to become one with it, to grow to it, so that only by main force the two can be torn asunder. It is something of this kind which is meant here. In such fashion cleave to that which is good—and if "to that which is good," then, as the sole condition of this, to *Him* that is good, who is *the Good, the Holy, the Just One.*—*Abp. Trench.*

[15846] What is it to cleave to that which is good? (1) To approve it. (2) To desire it (Rom. xii. 9). (3) To be constant in practising it, so as to be one with it.—*Bp. Beveridge.*

[15847] Christian penitence is something more than a thought, or an emotion, or a tear; it is action.—*W. Adams.*

[15848] True repentance consists in the heart being broken for sin, and being broken from sin. Some often repent, yet never reform; they resemble a man travelling in a dangerous path, who frequently starts and stops but never turns back.—*J. Thornton.*

[15849] Repentance begins in the humiliation of the heart, and ends in the reformation of the life.—*J. M. Mason.*

[15850] Repentance without amendment is like continual pumping in a ship without stopping the leaks.—*L. W. Dilwyn.*

[15851] Reformation is just as essential as repentance. That is, it is just as essential that you should, up to your power, do the deeds of a

good man or woman, as that you should take the resolution to be a good man or woman. If you are heartily sorry for misspent years, you will make it your business to spend your future years wisely. If you are called to renounce an undevout heart, the same Lord calls you to work with holy hands. In whatever the past has been irreligious and mean, the future must be sanctified and noble. Despising your selfishness, you must go on to generosity. Renouncing a paltry ambition, you must serve humanity and truth for their own immortal sake. The invisible energy that makes the acorn vital is nothing, unless you give it soil and air for growth and expansion into the fair proportions of the oak. Thus, in fact, reformation becomes the *test* of repentance, proving its sincerity and its worth. We infer that a miser is penitent when we see him giving liberally to the poor, or to spreading the gospel. A sensualist may profess to have repented; but we are not sure till we see him forsaking dissipation, and living temperately and chastely. A vain, frivolous girl deserves small confidence as repenting, till her whole appearance reveals a constant life hidden with Christ in God, and the dignity of a sober devotion to the welfare of others. It is not to be believed that a sullen or angry temper has been actually repented of till the countenance loses its unhalloved fire, and the voice its asperity, and the words come gently, like His, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again.—*F. D. Huntington.*

### (2) *Means by which it may be fulfilled.*

[15852] How are we to cleave to that which is good? To this is required; (1) Faith in Christ—because (a) nothing is in itself good but what is done by His grace (John xv. 5). (b) Nothing is accepted but by His merit (Isa. lxiv. 6; 1 Peter ii. 5). (2) Agreeableness with (Isa. i. 12) and obedience to the word of God (1 Sam. xv. 22). We must furthermore cleave—(3) Understandingly (1 Cor. xiv. 15). (4) Willingly (Psa. cx. 3). (5) Cheerfully (Psa. xl. 8). (6) With the utmost of our power (Eccles. ix. 10). (7) In faith (Rom. xiv. 23). (8) Humbly (2 Cor. iii. 5). (9) To the glory of God (Matt. vi. 16; 1 Cor. x. 31).—*Bp. Beveridge.*

### (3) *Considerations tending to its discharge.*

[15853] (1) Consider how honourable it is (1 Sam. ii. 30). (a) The work of angels (Heb. i. 14). (b) Of Christ (Acts x. 38). (c) Of God (Gen. i.). (2) How pleasant. (a) Thy conscience will hereby be void of offence (Acts xxiv. 16). (b) Thy heart will rejoice in the love of God. (3) How profitable. Hereby thou wilt gain (a) honour to thy religion. (b) God's favour to thyself (Isa. lxi. 2). (c) An assurance of thy interest in Christ (James ii. 26). (d) The concurrence of all things for thy good (Rom. viii. 28). (e) Eternal happiness (Matt. xxv. 46).—*Ibid.*

[15854] Why are we to cleave to that which is good? (1) Because we are constantly receiving good from God. (2) We are commanded to be always doing good (Luke i. 75; Prov. xxiii. 17;

Psa. cxix. 96). (3) When we do not good we sin.—*Ibid.*

## VI. ITS NECESSITY.

1 It is necessary because commanded by God, and required by Him of all men.

[15855] A glance at such passages as Isa. i. 16, 17, Jer. iv. 1, and Ezek. xxxiii. 11, will teach us how emphatically the summons to such repentance had been already heard from the lips of Israel's prophets. John the Baptist and Jesus both commenced their preaching with this demand. The Lord declared the calling sinners to repentance to be the object of His manifestation and labours, and the successful attainment of this end increases the joy of heaven. The same teaching stands in the forefront of the commission to His first witnesses, and history testifies to the fidelity with which the apostles at once discharged this part of their ministry. Repentance is, certainly, according to the teaching of Holy Scripture, the great object of the goodness of God, as well as of the punishment with which the Lord threatens the Church—*Van Oosterzee*.

[15856] Neither angel nor archangel, nor yet even the Lord Himself—who alone can say, "I am with you"—can, when we have sinned, release us, unless we bring repentance with us.—*Ambrose*.

2 It is necessary in order to fit the sinner to receive Divine instruction.

[15857] An unhumiliated sinner is as unfit for God's instruction as an unbroke colt for the saddle, and as the hard and clotty fallow ground not subdued by the plough is for the seed. Who can wield a mighty hard rock? But let it be broken to fetters and stamped to dust, the hand of the artificer may work it as he will. There is no more resistance in a bruised heart against the Lord than in soft wax against the seal.—*Dyke*.

3 It is a necessary transaction in the religious life and progress.

(1) *According to the law of nature.*

[15858] If the soul does not repent with contrition, and not merely with attrition, the nature of things forbids its peace. But the biblical and the natural truth is that prolonged dissimilarity of feeling with God may end in eternal sin. If there is eternal sin, there will be eternal punishment. Final permanence of character under the laws of judicial blindness and the self-propagating power of sin, is the truth emphasized by both God's word and His works. Under irreversible natural law there can be no blessedness without holiness. God's omnipotence cannot force blessedness on a soul that has lost the predominate desire to be holy. Omniscience cannot make happy a man who loves what God hates, and hates what God loves. If you fall into predominant dissimilarity of feeling with God, it is out of His power

to give you blessedness. Undoubtedly we are, of all men, most miserable, unless with our deliverance from the guilt of sin there comes to us also deliverance from the love of it. Without holiness there can be no blessedness; but there can be no holiness without a predominant love of what God loves and hate of what God hates. We grow wrong; we allow ourselves to crystallize in habits that imply a loss of a desire to be holy; and, at last, having made up our minds not to love predominantly what God loves, and hate what He hates, we are amazed that we have not blessedness. But the universe is not amazed. The nature of things is but another name for the Divine Nature. God would not be God if there could be blessedness without holiness.—*Joseph Cook*.

[15859] Repentance does not of itself remove the evil of misdoing, but there can be no remedy without it. In the mere light of morality it is an eternal loss to have done wrong; but having done so, the best possible thing that remains is to strive to regain by timely repentance the path of duty.—*Winslow*.

[15860] If you would be good, first believe that you are bad.—*Epictetus*.

(2) *According to revelation.*

[15861] Repentance must not become a state beyond which one makes no advance, not a fruitless brooding over ourselves and our past, so that we come to no volition for the future. But what is entirely overlooked is this truth, that what is important for a man is not only what he does, but what he becomes; and, moreover, not only what we ourselves do, but just as much what God does and works in us. It is overlooked that repentance is a necessary transition in the religious life-development of man, a necessary element in the moral creation of man, in order that he may come to die to sin and become what God has determined.—*Bp. Martensen*.

[15862] Before God can deliver us from ourselves, we must undeceive ourselves.—*Augustine*.

[15863] There is no going to the fair haven of glory without sailing through the narrow strait of repentance.—*S. Dyer*.

[15864] If the great way-maker do not cast down hills and raise up valleys in the bosoms of men, there is no passage for Christ. Never will Christ come into that soul where the herald of repentance hath not been before Him.—*Bp. Hall*.

[15865] A man may have a disease in his body that twenty medicines will heal; sin is a disease of the soul which makes it sick unto death; now there is but one medicine will heal, and that is the medicine of repentance. Did you ever know any salve so sovereign that would cure a wound that had a splint or an arrowhead remaining in it? Surely every known sin un



repented of hinders the saving operation of the Word in any man's heart.—*T. Watson.*

[15866] No mere shibboleth of a creed, however evangelical, no possession of religious privileges, however highly favoured we be in respect to them, will ensure the continuance of God's favour, without unfeigned repentance and faithful working by love.—*A. R. Fausset.*

## VII. ITS BENEFITS.

### 1 It receives tokens of Divine favour.

[15867] Though Peter sinned above the rest, yet, repenting, he is named above the rest. The husbandman loves that ground which, having abounded in weeds, doth yet afterward by good culture abound with good fruits, better than that ground which, as it was never abundant in weeds, so neither extraordinarily in good fruit. And the captain makes more of that soldier which, having fled, yet after returning doth valiant exploits upon the enemies than of him that ever kept his station, but did no special extraordinary service.—*Dyke.*

### 2 It averts Divine judgments.

[15868] God's anger is often in Scripture compared to fire; now look what power the elementary water hath against fire to quench it when it is beginning to flame and burst out, the same virtue is in the water of the tears of repentance, to keep the fire of God's wrath from breaking out upon us in His punishments. This is the water that can only prevent the burning of this fire.—*Ibid.*

### 3 It lightens our afflictions.

[15869] In all our afflictions it is more our sin than the affliction that pinches us. Sin is a thorn in the flesh which makes but the touch of the finger painful, whereas if that thorn were not, the stroke of the whole hand might be endured without any pain. Now repentance takes away that thorn, that is, sin, and so makes our afflictions both easy and comfortable. None so meek, quiet, patient, silent, and cheerful in affliction as the repentant sinner.—*Ibid.*

## VIII. ITS EFFECTS ON THE SOUL, AND ON THE CHRISTIAN LIFE GENERALLY.

### 1 It pains and afflicts the soul.

[15870] It must give pain; it must distress and afflict the life. In false religionism there are a secret luxury and pleasure which are wanting in the true. There is no discomfort in the state of gentle, plaintive pensiveness, into which some persons fall, mistaking it for deep religious conviction. To sit in a half-light, with a book of devotions richly bound, and having red edges and pretty markers, and to think it lovely to be a true Christian; then to kneel and pray, perchance to weep, and to go softly for a day or two or three, feeling somewhat as if it were a summer evening, and as if we heard

angels' voices about us; and so to go on in a soft, delicious dream, yet with a definite idea behind it that ere long a reaction must come, and we shall be back among the old worldly pleasures again: this is not so much a discipline as an added indulgence. It is like a warm bath with perfumes and ointments; the soul is bathing in its own sensibilities, and inhaling the breath of a sensuous devotion.—*Morgan Dix.*

[15871] True repentance makes itself known, first, by its hardness; it hurts, it pains, it does not please. There is, in every heart, a great deal of rubbish which it costs little or nothing to throw away; just as in a man's house there is no end to the knickknacks, the old, worn-out things, the useless litter which he would not miss if they were gone, and for which might be substituted what would make the place more pleasing to his eye. So in the heart and life there is a good deal that might be reformed, or got rid of, with little or no inconvenience; but after that, we come to other things on which we dare not lay hands, for we know that it is not so with them. What then do they who amuse themselves by playing at repentance? They lay hold of a few rubbishy things, and decide on making a grand sacrifice of them, and this they do with sounding speech and loud protestations; and, having cast these out, they think that something meritorious has been wrought, and are satisfied with themselves, and glory in the language of a feigned humility. This is but as play to work, as a midsummer siesta to a heavy day of toil.—*Ibid.*

[15872] Wait till you come to the real treasures, to the sins which you cannot give up; wait till the nerves begin to tingle, and the flesh to shudder; wait till you have gone through the porch and the antechamber, and have reached the secret, inmost shrine where self has set up her precious idol, before you begin to talk about repentance. Hardness is the test: pain, affliction of soul. "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; . . . if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee." Yet some, instead of cutting off the hand, think they are doing wonders in casting away an old glove; and others, instead of plucking out the eye, will bathe it in warm water, and deem that enough. True repentance can be known from false in this: first, that it is distasteful, bitter, hard; its course through the life is that of a fiery flame, and at first the life looks, not watered and refreshed, but burnt over. The idols are in the ashes; they are like the image of the Philistines when they arose early in the morning, and "behold! Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him" (1 Sam. v. 4). Apply this first test to your repentance before you assume that it is true in the sight of the Lord. If it has brought you a

pleasing sensation of religious luxury, not unattended by self-congratulation, there is no truth in it ; that only is true which goes against the grain, and sets the teeth on edge, and is bitter to the taste.—*Ibid.*

## 2 It re-invigorates the soul:

[15873] This is the admirable virtue of repentance, that with the eagle it causes us to renew our youth, and with the snake to be fresher and livelier after the casting of our old skin. When sin hath impaired and enfeebled, and made us old and withered creatures, repentance revives us, and puts young spirits into us. So hearty and so cordial is this physic of repentance. Other physic may take away our bodily infirmities, but yet so, that it brings some weakness to nature ; but repentance adds strength to our spiritual and renewed nature.—*Dyke.*

[15874] Worldly sorrow works a change in the body : it brings grey hairs on the head, and furrows and wrinkles in the face. It turns youth into old age, and strength into weakness, and so causeth death. But the change of godly sorrow is quite contrary : it turns old age into youth, and a weakness and sickness into health and strength.—*Ibid.*

## 3 It fits for other spiritual duties.

[15875] It keeps our hearts in a blessed frame of godliness, fitting them for prayer, meditation, reading, hearing, conference, admonition, or any other spiritual duty. Worldly sorrow is a heavy-laden thing, making a man fitter to sleep than to pray, as we see in Jonas, and the disciples. But godly sorrow in the sense of God's love is fresh and lively and full of spirits. We never pray or perform any Christian duty better than when our hearts are fullest of this sorrow.—*Ibid.*

## 4 It re-beautifies the soul:

[15876] Sin casts dirt in our faces, and be-smears, and befouls us, but after repentance may a man say as Nebuchadnezzar did of himself after his restoring : "At the same time was my glory and my beauty restored unto me." So at the time of our repentance the shame and the deformity which sin brought upon us is taken away, and our glory and our beauty is restored unto us, which we had before we sinned.—*Ibid.*

## 5 It produces calmness in the soul.

[15877] Repentance charms the winds and the blustering storms of the accusing conscience, and makes the haven of thine heart to be calm and clear. So that we may say of repentance, as they of our Saviour : "What kind of grace is this, that the winds and sea obey it?"—*Ibid.*

[15878] Surely after the most toilsome labour is the sweetest sleep ; after the greatest tempests the stillest calms. Sanctified trouble establishes peace ; and the shaking of these

winds makes the trees of God's Eden take the deeper rooting.—*Ibid.*

## 6 It is emphatically the sorrow that is turned into joy.

[15879] There is this peculiarity about confession to God, that instantly the soul is made sure He knows, not only the guilt, but all the longings of the soul to be better. It is not only the exposure of sin, but also of our little virtue, the virtue of struggle before we fell as well as holier present desires. We hold dialogue with One who can appreciate all, and needs no laboured explanations. The world too often misses the sweetest ray of light that shines upon confession.—*E. J. Haynes.*

[15880] True sorrow for sin always contains at the outset a hidden germ of joy, because the wound drives the sufferer to the Physician. Henceforth the negative is succeeded by the positive ; hatred of sin becomes dedication to the living God, and the inner centre of life in the sinner is so completely removed, that the former "I" has become a "no longer I." Thus it is but natural that the hitherto troubled soul becomes now both enlarged and purified, so that Luther could truly declare to Staupitz that the word *repentance* (*Busse*), which he formerly thought the most terrible word in the Bible, had afterwards become for him the most joyous.—*Van Oosterzee.*

[15881] What the Lord means by repentance is just the act of breaking through, from nature's limits and darkness, into the marvellous light and liberty of life in God. Therefore said He, "Except you repent"—unless you break through and beyond the gate of your natural life, the doom of all nature's generations hangs over you—you are perishing men. Breaking through, you meet the dawn of an endless future, the infinite sphere of God's Presence opens before you, you touch the edge of your unutterable joy. *Nature* shows us the path of *death*. "*Thou wilt show me the path of Life : in Thy presence is fulness of joy.*"—*J. Pulsford, D.D.*

[15882] Do not by any means wound the wounds of your soul, or afflict the afflictions of your consciences, with refusing to be comforted, and with distrust of recovery ; but presently by the hand of faith frame a plaster of Christ's precious blood, and apply it close to your broken and bruised hearts. The wider wounds sorrow for sin hath made in your souls, the more plentiful streams of the soft and sovereign oil of the comforts of the gospel and promises of peace shall be sure to close up your sores. Sooner must God deny Himself, which is impossible ; sooner must He disrobe Himself of the brightest beam of His glory, and of the fairest flower in His garland of majesty, which is His mercy, before He deny pardon to the truly penitent, or refuse to give ease to those that are heavy laden.—*B. Bolton.*

[15883] Tears are but finite ; 'tis but awhile

that we shall weep; after a few showers that fall from our eyes we shall have a perpetual sunshine. In heaven the bottle of tears is stopped. "God shall wipe away all tears" (Rev. vii. 17). When sin shall cease, tears shall cease. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psa. xxx. 5). In the morning of the Ascension, then shall all tears be wiped away.—*T. Watson.*

[15884] The effect of every burden laid down is to leave us relieved; and when the soul has laid down that of its faults at the feet of God, it feels as though it had wings.—*Eugenie de Guérin.*

## 7 It develops into the life of sanctification.

[15885] The pacified heart's earnest wish will be to tread the way of God's commandments. Thus repentance becomes an all-predominating *striving* to glorify God, and to increase in all that is well-pleasing to Him; together with the direction of life, the aim of life has become a different one; and the great question of Acts ix. 6 is now the question which dominates everything. To the essence of real repentance it belongs, that it gradually develops into the life of sanctification. It is impossible to be really repentant, and to live at the same time in undisturbed peace and amity with any sin, after it has been recognized as such. Hence, too, even the most sincere repentance is never perfected, and for the Christian, after every step forward or falling back, renewed repentance remains a necessity. It cannot rest until the old things are entirely passed away, and all things are become new.—*Van Oosterzee.*

[15886] God herein hath respect to His own glory, which He gaineth to Himself in working thus by contraries, joy out of fear, light out of darkness, heaven out of hell. When He meant to bless Jacob, He wrestled with him as an adversary, even till He lamed him. When He meant to prefer Joseph to the throne, He threw him down into the dungeon; to the golden chain about his neck, He laded him with iron ones about his legs, and caused the iron to enter into his soul. When He meant to make a most beautiful and orderly world, He makes first a vast gulf, a gross chaos, wherein was nothing but darkness and confusion; and yet out of it He caused light to shine, and out of it brought He this goodly frame of heaven and earth which now we see. Even so in the second creation which is by regeneration; first there is nothing but a hellish chaos of darkness in the mind, of confusion in the heart, and yet at length comes forth the goodliest creature that ever was, the new creature in Christ.—*Dyke.*

[15887] The effect of a hearty repentance is a change of the perverse will, whereby it is released from the thralldom of sin, and enabled to move in lines parallel with the holy and good will of God. That will then become the penitent's

law; but it is the "perfect law of liberty."—*Blunt's Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[15888] One tree above all others can flourish amidst the gloom and dirt of a London atmosphere. In these unfavourable circumstances, when most plants languish, the plane grows luxuriantly, spreading abroad its verdant, shade-giving, plume-like foliage, and attaining a considerable size. The chief secret of its successful growth amid surrounding impurities consists in its shedding its bark every year. This may be seen from time to time falling off in patches, which give to the smooth trunk of the plane a very striking, parti-coloured, and picturesque appearance. Thus the tree is enabled to throw off continually the filth, which, by its accumulations, is so fatal to the life of other forms of vegetation in great cities. Behold a picture of repentance, which is called repentance unto life, for it leads to life, and sustains life in the awakened soul.—*Rev. J. Neil (abridged).*

## 8 It makes a man humble in his own eyes, diffident, and retiring in his manners and habits.

[15889] Find a man who indeed repented, and this will be his portrait. Humble and of few words, and quite without words of praise, he seems to have gone through some deep experience which has left him quiet and thoughtful; to the voice of eulogy he is as indifferent as to that of censure; having felt God's hand, he cares little for the hand of man; he would rather go his way unnoticed and unwatched than be seen of men and talked about by the world; he has no appetite for human praise, because he abhors himself, not in words, but really; and knowing right well that there is nothing in him which deserves to be lauded, he bears with pain the language of commendation. How absurdly, how distressingly does it sound to a true penitent when he is well spoken of! How thankfully does he take it when men speak ill of him! He says, "It is true, it is just; and did they but know all, they might say worse a hundredfold, yet do me no injustice; for he who boasts, and brags, and speaks in loud, censorious tones, is no true child of Christ. The man who plays at repenting may find it a very entertaining amusement, and be gratified at his successful rendering of the character assumed; nor will there come, through this clever performance, any conception of his own real detestableness, nor sorrow, nor shame, but rather self-laudation and approval."—*Morgan Dix.*

## 9 It influences to greater zeal for the future, on account of past misspent time.

[15890] The more way and time a man hath lost, the more earnest and zealous he is in the redemption of both. A man that hath rid out of his way, when once he perceives it, will spur the harder and gallop the faster till he hath recovered so far as he might have been if he had kept his way in a good reasonable pace. So



when the repentant considers how much knowledge and experience he might have gained if the good time which he hath misspent in his sins had been spent upon better things.—*Dyke*.

### IX. ITS FOES.

[15891] The first is (a) practical Pelagianism, which considers repentance unnecessary, except for some monstrous sinners, or else, when accompanied by Indifferentism, postpones it as long as possible. The second is (β) a passive Quietism, which does not regard repentance as a duty, but only as a gift, for which we may listlessly wait. Thirdly, there is (γ) a sectarian Methodism, which will have all men repent according to one and the same model, and in the same way. And the fourth is (δ) an unspiritual Pharisaism, which, taken up with itself, too soon bids farewell to repentance, as to a thing already done with, whilst it needs in the highest degree the lesson of love, "pour assortir votre Christianisme, commencez par convertir votre conversion."—*Van Oosterzee*.

### X. ITS TESTS, VIEWED GENERALLY.

[15892] The following may serve as useful tests to detect a counterfeit and false repentance, and to prove a true and scriptural repentance :—1. Is sin regarded as an offence against a loving Father, as an injury to our own souls, and hurtful to others? 2. Have we a true and godly sorrow for sins of thought as well as of deeds of omission or commission—for little offences equally with great?—in fine, for transgressions against the Divine law of every possible description, and that not out of a selfish dread of the consequences of what we have done? 3. Is there self-reproach and self-abhorrence, without any attempt to extenuate or excuse, cloak, or hide sin? 4. Are there present the elements of love and hope arising from the consciousness of God's mercy in Christ? "The well-spring of repentance is *faith*, first breeding fear and then love, which love causeth hope, hope resolution of attempt. ('I will go to my Father, and say, I have sinned against heaven and against Thee'—that is to say, I will do what the duty of a convert requireth)"—(Hooker, bk. vi.)—*C. IV.*

[15893] Many suspect their repentance because their grief is not expressed with external passion. But if you find upon mature deliberation that you had rather for the future suffer the greatest affliction than willingly commit the least sin, you may conclude it to be sincere.—*Bp. Beveridge*.

### XI. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE REPENTANCE OF THE SINNER AND THAT OF THE ACCEPTED CHILD OF GOD.

[15894] Repentance of the sinner is to be distinguished from that of the forgiven, ac-

cepted child of God : in the one case, it is the returning from the far country ; in the other, it is the humble confession of the child living in the Father's house, that he still feels he leaves undone the things he ought to have done, and that he does the things he ought not to have done, and that there is no health in him. Nowhere have we language of deeper self-abasement than in the confession in our Communion Service, but it is manifestly a service for those walking in fellowship with God.—*G. Everard*.

### XII. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN REPENTANCE AND FAITH.

[15895] Real repentance of heart and life is impossible without love, but this last is not conceivable where the trust of faith is wanting. So this belief first causes desire and courage and power for a daily renewed repentance, which brings forth the fruits of the new obedience. On the other hand, too, the penitent sorrow is not merely calmed by faith, it is also increased, because in proportion as we believe in a higher love, and experience a richer mercy, we shall feel the more sorrow on account of the enormity of evil. There is thus a reflexive operation in the domain of faith and repentance, in which too sharp definition will rather prevent than produce a right theory and practice.—*Van Oosterzee*.

[15896] Fruitful repentance passes over to the determination, "I will arise and go to my Father," passes over into faith in God's pitying grace, and lays hold of the comfort of the gospel. Faith without repentance is indeed only a dead faith, a mere acceptance of the truth not proceeding from the heart. But repentance without faith must finally pass into despair, because the man has nothing in himself wherewith he could liquidate his debt. In true repentance the honest will to be redeemed asserts itself, and the man submits to be redeemed, to be justified before God, and that of pure grace.—*Bp. Martensen*.

[15897] Gospel tears must drop from the eye of faith (Mark ix. 24). The father of the child cried out with tears, Lord, I believe. Our disease must make us mourn ; but when we look up to our Physician, who hath made a plaster of His own blood, we must not "mourn without hope ;" believing tears are precious ; when the clouds of sorrow have overcast the soul, some sunshine of faith must break forth ; the soul will be swallowed up of sorrow, it will be drowned in tears, if faith be not the bladder to keep it up from sinking ; though our tears drop to the earth, our faith must reach heaven ; after the greatest rain faith must appear as the rainbow in the cloud.—*T. Watson*.

[15898] Repentance is faith's usher, and dews all her way with tears. Repentance reads the law and weeps ; faith reads the gospel and comforts. Repentance looks on the rigorous

brow of Moses; faith beholds the sweet countenance of Christ Jesus.—*T. Adams.*

[15899] There is no true repentance, repentance unto life, without faith; and there is no true faith without repentance. When faith is spoken of as being unto salvation, the believing sinner is supposed a penitent. And when repentance is connected with salvation, the penitent sinner is supposed to be a believer. Repentance always supposes or includes faith when it is spoken of by itself and connected with the remission of sins. "Such is the connection between repentance and faith in the Scriptures, that the one commonly supposes the other. Repentance, when followed by the remission of sins, supposes faith in the Saviour; and faith, when followed with justification, equally supposes repentance for sin."—*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*

### XIII. ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PHASES OF REPENTANCE, FALSE AND TRUE, DRAWN FROM SCRIPTURE.

#### 1 Scripture examples of true repentance of believers after their falls.

[15900] 1. *Job* (Job xlii. 6). His repentance was produced by a just sense of the character and presence of God after passing through extraordinary trial, and having his mind much perplexed by doubts and difficulties.

2. *David* (2 Sam. xii. 13). His repentance was induced by faithful reproof. His fall was in "times of wealth," when living in ease and luxury. He was overcome by sensual temptation.

3. *Peter* (Matt. xxvi. 75). His repentance took very much the form of a consciousness of ingratitude and unfaithfulness. His fall was owing to self-confidence and want of watchfulness under adversity. His impulsiveness led him astray. He lacked moral courage.

4. *The Corinthians* (2 Cor. vii. 9). Their repentance was connected with burning indignation and consuming zeal. The Church at Corinth had grievously backslided, and degenerated in moral tone.—*C. N.*

#### 2 Scripture examples of true repentance in the case of the ungodly.

[15901] 1. *Manasseh* (2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13). His repentance was induced by personal affliction and pressing calamity. He was a sinner against light and knowledge and solemn and repeated warnings. The process of his repentance was gradual. In the solitude of exile and imprisonment he had leisure for reflection.

2. *The Thief on the Cross* (Luke xxiii. 39-43). His repentance was at the eleventh hour. He was one who had few opportunities. The act of his change was sudden.

3. *Zaccheus* (Luke xix. 8). His repentance was connected with restitution. He was a prosperous man, worldly, and probably exacting, like all his class in life. The publicans were ranked with heathens.

4. *The Ninevites* (Jonah iii. 5-10). The repen-

tance of this heathen people was national in its character, and produced by predicted judgments.—*C. N.*

#### 3 Superficial and false repentance.

[15902] 1. *Ahab*. (1 Kings xxi. 27-29). His repentance was from fear of consequences, and for the time led to self-abasement. He was a weak man, under the sway of a strong-minded and wicked woman.

2. *Saul* (1 Sam. xv. 24-30). His repentance was from worldly interests and expedients. He was a well-intentioned but weak-principled man, who was injured by his elevation to an exalted station and absolute power.

3. *Judas* (Matt. xxvii. 3-5). His was the repentance of remorse, owing to the appalling consequences (contrary to his expectation) to which his conduct had led. He was a greedy, mean, and designing person, placed in a position where the good or evil in a man would quickly mature.—*C. N.*

### XIV. CHARACTERISTICS AND EVIDENCES OF FALSE AND SPURIOUS REPENTANCES.

[15903] False or spurious repentance is said to be worldly, the sorrow of the world; that is, it is sorrow for sin, arising from worldly considerations and motives connected with the present life, or at most has respect to his "own happiness" in a future world, and has no regard to the true nature of sin.—*C. G. Finney.*

[15904] The repentance of an unawakened sinner is often like a blind man running from the flames of a burning house; he runs he knows not where, and is most likely to stumble in the darkness.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[15905] Forced confession and reluctant repentance are like the repentance born in the storm, which generally dies in the calm.—*Ibid.*

[15906] Many sinners who appear to repent are like sailors who throw their goods overboard in a storm, and wish for them again in a calm.—*Mead.*

[15907] There are some who would have God to forgive them their sins, to give them heaven, and save their souls; yet have no desire to leave sin, nor lead a new course of life. They swear, and swill, and plod on in wickedness, adding drunkenness to thirst, dealing (herein) as Louis the Eleventh did, with his leaden crucifix (which he used to wear in his hat), which, after he had committed any wickedness or villany, he would kiss, and then to it again as fresh as he did before. They run on into all excess of riot, then cry, "God mercy," yet go on still in their wicked way.—*Anon.*

[15908] The individual who has exercised true repentance is willing to have it known that he has repented, and willing to have it known that he was a sinner. He who has only false repentance resorts to excuses and lying to cover his

sins, and is ashamed of his repentance.—*C. G. Finney.*

[15909] Those whose repentance is not a true one are not cheerful and happy in religion. They are grieved because they have to break off from so many things they love, or because they have to give so much money. They are in the fire all the time. Instead of rejoicing in every opportunity of self-denial, and rejoicing in the plainest and most cutting exhibitions of truth, it is a great trial to them to be told their duty, when it crosses their inclinations and habits. The plain truth distresses them. Why? Because their hearts do not love to do duty. If they loved to do their duty, every ray of light that broke in upon their minds from heaven, pointing out their duty, would be welcomed, and make them more and more happy.—*Ibid.*

#### XV. INADEQUATE PRINCIPLES FROM WHICH SIN MAY BE FORSAKEN.

##### 1 From mere morality.

[15910] Moral arguments may suppress sin. I have read of a debauched heathen, who, hearing Socrates read an ethic lecture of virtue and vice (though he came with a purpose to deride Socrates, yet) he went away changed, and did no more follow his former exorbitancies. *Cato, Seneca, Aristides*, seeing a beauty in virtue, did lead unblamable lives.—*T. Watson.*

##### 2 From policy.

[15911] A man may forsake sin, not out of respect to God's glory, but his own credit. Vice will waste his estate, eclipse the honour of his family, therefore out of policy he will divorce his sin.—*Ibid.*

##### 3 From necessity.

[15912] Perhaps he can now follow the trade of sin no longer; the adulterer is grown old, the drunkard poor; his heart is to sin, but either his purse fails him or his strength; as a man that loves hunting, but his prison fetters will not suffer him to follow the sport. This man who is necessitated to put a stop to sin, doth not so much forsake sin as sin forsakes him.—*Ibid.*

#### XVI. MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY AS REGARDS REPENTANCE.

[15913] The external means of repentance which God affords to men do suppose an inward grace of God accompanying them, sufficiently enabling men to repent, if it be not their own fault; I say a sufficient grace of God accompanying the outward means of repentance, till by our wilful and obstinate neglect and resistance and opposition of this grace, we provoke God to withdraw it from the means, or else to withdraw both the grace and the means from us: otherwise, impenitence after such external means afforded, would be no new and special fault.

For if the concurrence of God's grace with the outward means be necessary to work repentance, then the impenitence of those to whom this grace is not afforded, which yet is necessary to repentance, is neither any new sin, nor any new aggravation of their former impenitence. For no man can imagine that the just God will charge men with new guilt, and increase their condemnation, for remaining impenitent in such circumstances in which it is impossible for them to repent.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

#### XVII. THE INTERNAL WORKING OF GENUINE REPENTANCE.

##### 1 Its general phenomena as given by St. Paul (2 Cor. vii. 11).

[15914] We have here the several steps of a true repentance, as exemplified at Corinth: (1) carefulness or earnestness of purpose; (2) eagerness to apologize for not having sooner cast out the unclean thing; (3) indignation—righteous wrath at the sin and shame; (4) fear—of God's displeasure; (5) desire—for restoration to God's favour; (6) zeal—increased religious fervour; (7) revenge—by a rigorous self-control. More particularly the penitent takes revenge upon his former self, by cultivating especially that virtue which is the direct opposite of the sin by which he fell. Thus the man repenting of the sin of covetousness will cherish the virtue of liberality. The man who has offended with his tongue will in his repentance be more than usually careful of his words. It hence appears that repentance is not a transitory sensation of sorrow, but issues in a continuous change of feeling and action.—*Anon.*

##### 2 Its phenomena viewed more in detail.

###### (1) *Solicitude.*

[15915] "Behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness" (*σπουδήν*). Men who have repented are no longer unconcerned about spiritual matters, but are cautious, careful, diligent. They do not walk as fools, but as wise men, "redeeming the time." The necessity of carefulness may be argued from three facts. First: The corrupting influences of social life. Secondly: The agency of tempting spirits. The great arch-tempter has millions of tempting spirits under his command. They all work insidiously, skilfully, persistently. Thirdly: The remaining depravity of our own nature. In the best of men in this life some elements of depravity remain more or less powerful. These are tinder for the devil's fire, a fulcrum for the devil's lever. Hence be careful.—*The Homilist.*

###### (2) *Deprecation.*

[15916] "What clearing of yourselves!" The meaning is, how anxious to show your disapproval of the evil of which you have been guilty. Instead of covering it up you confess it, instead of excusing it, you denounce it. You deprecate your past life, as an outrage on mo-



rality, as an offence to Heaven. Thus genuine repentance ever works. The converted drunkard denounces drunkenness, the converted liar denounces falsehood, the converted debauchee denounces unchastity, the converted thief denounces dishonesty, &c. Thus the repentant sinner is anxious to clear himself of it.—*Ibid.*

(3) *Anger.*

[15917] "What indignation!" Against what? Against sin as sin, wrong as wrong. Repentance generates a deadly hatred to evil. This is a holy anger. We have little faith in the moral excellency of those who cannot go into flames of indignation whenever the wrong appears before them. There is a time to hate. There is no good man who is not a hater.

"Rough Johnson the great moralist professed Right honestly he liked an honest hater."

"Who is offended and I burn not?" says Paul. The stronger a man's love for the right, the more tremendous his anger against the wrong. Strong love for the thing loved necessitates strong hate for the thing hated. "Dante, who loved well because he hated, hated wickedness because he loved" (Browning). When a repentant soul muses not only on the sins of others, but on his own past sins, the fires of indignation kindle into a blaze. The man who has not indignation for sin has never repented. "Do not I hate them, O God, that hate Thee?"—*Ibid.*

(4) *Dread.*

[15918] "What fear!" Fear, not of suffering, but of sin; not of God, but of the devil; not of losing property, health, or even life itself, but of losing any of the great elements of moral goodness. This fear is in truth the highest courage. The man who dreads the morally wrong is the true hero. In truth this fear is but a modification of love. It is love dreading to displease or injure in any way the object on which it has centred its affection.—*Ibid.*

(5) *Earnestness.*

[15919] "What vehement desire!"—what longing for a higher life! "What zeal!"—what intense desire to eschew the wrong and to pursue the right! "What revenge!" (ekdike sin)—exactng a punishment. What a craving to crush the wrong! All these expressions mean intense earnestness, and earnestness not about temporal matters, which is common and unvirtuous; but about spiritual matters, which is rare and praiseworthy. Genuine repentance is antagonistic to indifference; it generates earnestness in the soul; it leads to the most strenuous efforts, to the most vehement cries to Heaven.—*Ibid.*

XVIII. THE FOLLY, UNWORTHINESS, AND DANGER OF ITS POSTPONEMENT.

[15920] Repent in order that you may not sin, but never sin in order that you may repent; for

though it is true that God has promised forgiveness to repentance, it is not true that He has promised repentance to the sinner.—*M. J.*

[15921] See to it that repentance come not upon you at that time, when the only thing that remains for you is despair.—*Isidore of Pelusium.*

[15922] True repentance is never too late, but late repentance is seldom true. You cannot repent too soon, because you know not how soon it may be too late.—*A. Fuller.*

[15923] He that hath promised pardon on our repentance hath not promised life till we repent.—*F. Quarles.*

[15924] If we put off repentance another day, we have a day more to repent of, and a day less to repent in.—*J. M. Mason.*

[15925] The consummation of madness is to do what, at the time of doing it, we intend to be afterwards sorry for; the deliberate and intentional making work for repentance.—*Dr. Nevins.*

[15926] Every moment passing without repentance adds to the guilt and strength of sin unrepented of; which lies not idle or inactive, but fixes its possession deeper and deeper; the mind, by reflecting upon it with relish and complacency, grows into more intimate unions with it; so that in effect, by the internal actions and approbations of the will, it is repeated and re-acted without any external commission.—*R. South, D.D.*

[15927] Let men but reflect upon their own observation, and consider impartially with themselves how few in the world they have known made better by age. Generally they will see that such leave not their vice, but their vice leaves them, or rather retreats from their practices, and retires into their fancy, and that we know is boundless and infinite; and when vice has once settled itself there it finds a vaster and a wider compass to act in than ever it had before. I scarce know anything that calls for a more serious consideration from us than this; for still men are apt to persuade themselves that they shall find it an easy matter to grow religious as they grow old. But it is a way of arguing highly irrational and fallacious. For this is a maxim of eternal truth, that nothing grows weak with age but that which will at length die with age; which sin never does. The longer a blot continues, the deeper it sinks. And it will be found a work of no small difficulty to dispossess and throw out a vice from that heart where long possession begins to plead prescription. It is naturally impossible for an old man to grow young again; and it is next to impossible for a decrepit, aged sinner to become a new creature and be born again.—*Ibid.*

[15928] Satan emboldeneth the sinner by telling him how many have repented and sped well that sinned as bad, or worse than this: he tells him of Noah, and Lot, and David, and

Peter, and the thief on the cross, and Paul, a persecutor, yea, and Manasseh, &c. But consider whether any of those did thus sin, because that others had escaped that sinned before them. And think of the millions that never repented and are condemned, as well as those few that have repented. Is repentance better than sin? why then will you sin? Is sin better than repentance? why then do you purpose to repent? Is it not base ingratitude to offend God wilfully, because He hath pardoned many offenders, and is ready to forgive the penitent? And should a man of reason wilfully make work for his own repentance, and do that which he knoweth he shall wish with grief that he had never done? If some have been saved that fell into the sea, or that fell from the top of steeples, or that drunk poison, or that were dangerously wounded, will you then forecast yourself into the same case, in hope of being saved?—*R. Baxter.*

[15929] If a man take in the spring three or four plants and set them all together at one time, if he come within a while after he may easily pull up one of them; if he stay a fortnight or a month he may pull up another, but it will be somewhat harder; if he stay a year or two, till it have taken deep root, then he may pull and pull his heart out, his labour is all in vain, he shall never be able to move it. And thus it is that one sin one offence, if we labour to pull it up in time it may be forgiven, it may be taken away; and if we let that one go on to two or three, yet with unfeigned repentance, with bleeding tears, with incessant outcries to a gracious God, they may be razed out and wiped away, but with greater difficulty; but if a man give up himself to sin, accustom himself to do evil, so that it take deep root in the heart and be settled in the soul, he shall never be able to pull it up nor arise from the death of sin, which hath so fast seized on him.—*Simson.*

[15930] Do we not see how easily the crookedness of a young twig may be corrected? Let it alone till it be grown a confirmed tree, it is inflexible. Alas, how many have there been, who, deceiving themselves with an opinion of a repenting hereafter, as thinking the present time when God called them unseasonable; afterward, seeing their error, and how they had let slip the season, have then cried out, they could not repent because the season was now past, it was now too late! What a cunning trick of thine is this, oh thou deceitful heart! when thou shouldst do good, to say, It is too soon, that time is not yet come, hereafter I will do it, and yet when this thy hereafter is come, then to say, Now it is too late, the time is past! Let us not then be thus deluded, suffering the time of grace to overpass us to our destruction.—*D. Dyke.*

[15931] Let us not deceive ourselves in thinking, because we are young, we have therefore time enough before us, we need not make such haste. Alas! it is but a day, a short day, all the time that we have. Oh that in this thy day,

saith Christ, and then after it comes in eternal night. Other days, though they have their nights, yet those nights end, and day comes again, but after this day is once gone there never comes a new day to work the work of the Lord in again.—*Ibid.*

[15932] The chicken that will not come when the hen clucks may be well caught by the kite. The sick men that came not into the water when the angel moved were not healed. It is not with the tides of God's grace as in the tides of water, which come certainly at set time, so that he that misses the morning tide may have the evening tide. No, it is tide *to-day*, and *now* it is tide. Now take it if thou be wise, thou knowest not whether in all thy lifetime the like grace will be offered thee again.—*Ibid.*

[15933] We think to shake off our sins afterward, but the longer they tarry the faster they cleave.—*Ibid.*

[15934] We read in the story of Esau (Heb. xii. 17), because he neglected the time of obtaining the blessing, that afterward when he would have inherited the blessing he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. So it may be suspected that if a man neglect repentance all his lifetime, it will be hardly found at last. For Augustine in this case saith well: "If a man repent when he can sin no more, it may be thought he forsakes not his sin, but his sin forsakes him."—*J. Smith.*

[15935] He that waits for repentance waits for that which cannot be had as long as it is waited for; it is absurd for a man to wait for that which he himself has to do.—*W. Nevins.*

[15936] How great is the unworthiness of grinding the corn of life so that we give to Satan and the world the best of the flour and reserve God and religion the bran and husks!—*Anon.*

[15937] This life only is our day, because then we must work. Manna was to be gathered only in the six days, none upon the Sabbath. The time after our life is a Sabbath from working the works of God. Now then in the six days of our life is the manna of faith and repentance to be gathered. Some went out to seek manna upon the Sabbath but found none. If once our Sabbath be come, none shall find nor eat manna that hath not gathered it before. As therefore we are bidden to remember this weekly Sabbath, that our worldly business be not deferred till then, but may be despatched in the six days beforehand, so must we also remember that eternal Sabbath after this life, and despatch the spiritual businesses of repentance and not put them off till the working days be past. *The life to come is no time of repentance. It is the time of judgment, not of repentance.*—*Dyke.*

[15938] When the dew falls, then the ground is wet; when the Spirit of God falls as dew in its influences upon the soul, then it is moistened

with sorrow, but if the Spirit withdraw, the soul is like Gideon's dry fleece. A ship can as well sail without the wind, a bird can as well fly without wings, as we can mourn without the Spirit. Take heed of grieving the Spirit; do not drive away this sweet dove from the ark of thy soul. The Spirit is *res tenera et delicata*; if it be grieved it may say, I will come no more, and if it once withdraw we cannot mourn.—*T. Watson*.

[15939] As it is never too soon to do good, so it is never too late to repent. I will, therefore, neither neglect the time present, nor despair of the time past. If I had been sooner good, I might perhaps have been better; if I am longer bad, I shall, I am sure, be worse.—*A. Warwick*.

[15940] This thought seems to cut up by the root the very common idea of many—that it will be easy to repent by and by. If repentance is a grace of the Divine Spirit as well as a duty, how do you know, brother, that you may have either the desire or the power to repent hereafter, if you refuse to do so now that God calls you to-day? I have noticed in the iron-works how quickly men snatch away the bar of iron from the furnace, that the hammer may shape it, and the drill bore it, and the knife cut it whilst it is bright red, and before the cold air has power over it. Oh, beware of deadening good impression! The iron will soon get cold: use the favourable moment. If you have any thought of eternity, any feeling of sin, any wish to be a Christian, repent now. Turn to God. Tarry not a moment, lest the opportunity should for ever have fled by.—*G. Everard*.

[15941] Death is no fit time to begin to learn repentance. It is absurd for a soldier to seek his armour when the battle is begun. The apprentice will not be able to learn his trade when his time is going. Repentance should be an introduction to death, rather than death to repentance. Besides, at the time of death the body is so possessed with pains, and the soul so taken up with fear of death, that a man is altogether unfit for so great and weighty a work as repentance is; yea, we see that men upon their death-beds are not fit to meddle with ordinary matters of the world, and shall we think that when we are unfit for the basest things of the earth that we can be fit for the great and weighty businesses of heaven?—*Dyke*.

[15942] He that repents every day for the sins of every day, when he comes to die will have the sins but of one day to repent of; short reckonings make long friends.—*Philip Henry*.

## XIX. THE GUILT OF IMPENITENCE.

[15943] The physician is not so much offended with the loathsomeness of the disease, as with the contempt of his physic, which he knows being taken would heal the disease.

Nor God so much with thy most odious sins, as with this, that thy impenitent heart refuses His physic.—*Dyke*.

## SELF-DENIAL, INCLUDING FASTING.

### I. SELF-DENIAL IN ITS TRUE ASPECT.

1 The willingness to yield up for Christ's sake all our possessions.

[15944] We should be willing to part with all earthly comforts and conveniences, to quit all our temporary interests and enjoyments, and even life itself, for the sake of Christ and His religion; this our Saviour means, by denying ourselves; and then (which is much the same with the other) that we should be willing to bear any temporal inconvenience and suffering upon the same account.—*Abp. Tillotson*.

[15945] It is a vast deal easier for a man outwardly to abandon, than to abandon in his heart and desire; and many a monk in a monastery has as much hankering after the things of this life, and as firm a conviction that they are the best after all, as if he were rolling in wealth or killing himself in the pursuit of it. But true self-denial—the voluntary leaving all for Christ—consists in putting everything we have—houses, lands, mills, factories, balances at our bankers, pictures, home—second, and putting Jesus Christ first.—*Rev. Alex. Mac-laren, D.D.*

2 The readiness to subordinate love for earthly relatives and friends to love for Christ.

[15946] A mother's tenderness, a father's care, a wife's self-sacrifice, children's love—all these are to be rigidly subordinated to the supreme love of Christ, and all these are to be put aside, gently and tenderly, with a very loving hand, but yet with a very firm one, to be put aside if they would at all avail to cross the path along which our eye should travel, and our heart with our eye, unto Him. When my love of my dear ones comes between me and the full enjoyment of full communion with Jesus Christ, it is time for me to stop. When some one here is so dear to me that I have little love or desire for the excellent sweetness of Christ, a man's foci have become those of his own household, and we need to say, "Deliver me from these, and keep me from anything that comes between me and Jesus." All that tender, pure, sweet earthly love which makes the one real joy in the world, is meant to be to us a symbol, and to carry our thoughts upwards and onwards to something beyond itself. . . . Our home must not make us forget our end, and the cross must be nearer to our breast than father or mother, husband, wife, or child.—*Ibid.*



### 3 The entire surrender of the whole man to Christ.

[15947] "Let him deny himself." Deny himself; that is, destroy entirely his own separate personal existence, live as though he had none, have no self whatever, but allow self to be swallowed up in the being of another. We hear this phrase sometimes explained as if it simply meant—refuse some enjoyment to yourself, deprive yourself of some comfort and luxury to which you have been accustomed, for the sake of Christ. And, doubtless, this idea is contained in the words; doubtless it will again and again be required of us as we strive to follow Christ. But the real signification of the words is far wider and deeper than this. It is emptying that great word "self-denial" of much of its meaning, to confine it to an occasional deprivation of certain comforts and luxuries. Self-denial is not only to affect particular actions, it is to give its colour to our whole life. What the word means is denial of self; denial of its very existence, its utter annihilation and destruction, the complete surrender of our whole body, soul, and spirit, tempers, dispositions, intelligence, will, into His hands, in whom, even by our natural birth, we live and move and have our being, and into whom we have been engrafted in a far closer and more pervading union by the new birth of the Spirit which we receive from the infinite mercy of the Son of God. "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself;" let him resolve, that is, henceforth to have no separate existence, but in all that he thinks, feels, or does; in all his desires, tastes, occupations, hopes, let him surrender himself implicitly to My will.—*Rev. C. J. Lias, M.A.*

[15948] It is of extreme importance to observe that what we give in sacrifice to God must in some true sense be our own. In the Jewish ritual "the most important consideration was this, that the offering presented should be the property of the person presenting it. Every kind of property was to be excluded which had not been acquired by the worshipper himself in the sweat of his face, that is, by his own diligence and toil. But wine, oil, corn, and cattle were not merely the result of his toil and care, they were also and chiefly the fruit of the blessing of God, a gift of God." When the prophet Hosea uses the very bold imagery of rendering to God "the calves of our lips," he leads us to think of the richest results of intellectual labour and of spiritual activity, brought out into the actual expression of human language. These we may bring in sacrifice to God, not because we regard them as faulty, but, on the contrary, because we have nothing more free from blemish to bring.—*P. Strutt, M.A.*

### 4 The voluntary bearing of the cross of Christ from day to day.

[15949] The cross is to be met with in little things as well as in great things. It is not merely in stupendous conflicts with the powers

of evil within us that we are to discover the presence of the cross, but in the little details of daily life—in our conduct with our own friends—aye, with those who are dearest to us, it may be; in the daily subjection of our creaturely will; in the turning aside, not from all that is attractive because it is attractive, but from those attractions which lead us out of the path of duty or privilege; not because they are attractions, but because they lead us from our true position; in the continual preference of that which savours of God to that which savours of man; in putting His will first, and our own will always second; in never doing a thing merely because it pleases us to do it, nor shrinking from doing a thing because it is painful, but in ever endeavouring to be guided by the desire—whether in the grateful acceptance of those innocent pleasures which are so many indications of His fatherly love, or whether in the cheerful acceptance of those sorrows which, from time to time, like fatherly chastisement, fall to our lot—to become conformed unto the nature of Him who is our Leader.—*Rev. W. Hay Aitken.*

[15950] Do not wait until the cross is strapped upon your shoulders. We read of one Simon, the Cyrenian, who was "compelled to bear the cross." There are many Christians of whom this is true. They are compelled to bear the cross; but how does it come? It comes by their running away from it. They make up their minds they won't have Christ's cross; and they find, when the cross does come, that it comes in a more terrible form, with a more crushing weight, than ever it would have come had they only been content to submit themselves to the Divine direction; for the cross has to come to all who are to be prepared for glory hereafter. Jonah found the cross of preaching at Nineveh an intolerably heavy one, and he ran away from it. He found a heavier cross still when he stood by the bulwarks of the ship, when the sailors laid their hands on him to throw him over; and heavier still as he went into the darkness, and there spent three days and three nights.—*Ibid.*

## II. ITS SUPREME IMPORTANCE AS A CHRISTIAN DUTY.

Self-denial is an indispensable condition of discipleship.

[15951] There is a cross for every one of us. We shall not escape it if we follow Him. Have you made up your minds to escape the cross? If that is the determination with which you set out on your spiritual pilgrimage, then you must also make up your mind to lose the society of Jesus. He does not say, "If any man will go to heaven let him take up his cross;" but He says, "If any man will come after Me, I am going forth on My journey: before Me lie the shadows of Gethsemane, and My vision finds its horizon crowned with the cross of Calvary. There it stands before Me in all its grim horror. I am going on step by step towards it. Every

pulsation of My blood brings Me nearer to it; and I have made up My mind; My will is fixed; My face is set like a flint; the will which reigns within My bosom is the will of the everlasting God Himself. I am content, My God, to do Thy will. And now this is the course I take; and if any of you want to follow Me, you must go the same road. You can only maintain fellowship with Me by placing your steps where Mine have fallen." "If any man"—whether he be the highest saint, or whether he be only a newborn babe in Christ—"if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."—*Ibid.*

[15952] "Follow Me," says Christ. It were enough to know this, did we know no more. Christ is our Example, and we are bound to follow Him, whether He condescends to give us reasons or not. A guide among the ice-clad peaks of Switzerland cannot always explain why he selects his path as he does; but it is a matter of life and death to those who follow to place their feet as they see him do. Our journey is equally dangerous, and Christ leads the way. He bears His cross and calls on us to take up ours.—*Rev A. P. Foster.*

[15953] Christ has in His mind the principle of the higher and the lower good. The latter must be sacrificed whenever it comes in conflict with the former. Certain things that pertain to the earth are undoubtedly good, but other things are better. Sometimes we cannot have both, and then we must give up the good for the best. Benedict Arnold was eager for British gold and rank. Undoubtedly gold and rank are desirable in themselves, but they may cost too much. Certainly Arnold found it so, for when in his last years Talleyrand asked him, not knowing his name, but only that he was an American, for a letter to his friends in the United States, he exclaimed in bitterness, "I am the only man born in the New World who can raise his hands to God and say, I have not a single friend, not one, in all America." His honour, the friendships of the good, his own self-respect, would have been worth more to him than all he gained by refusing self-denials. Men often make a like mistake. Christ calls on them to bear the cross, and they refuse. The cross is indispensable, would we gain the crown.—*Ibid.*

[15954] The methods of Jesus Christ were different from those of all other men who ever sought to make disciples. Other men present the brightest and most enticing side of the life to which they call their followers. But, while Jesus Christ told His disciples of the glory and reward they were to receive, He, at the same time, clearly pointed out to them that, to reach the rewards, they must make great sacrifices. Suffering and death must precede resurrection. Whoso follows a great leader must pay great penalties. Christian discipleship is ever associated with cross-bearing. This should be distinctly understood by all who would live a godly

life. Let no young disciple be deceived at the commencement of his Christian course. Those who will live godly must prepare to suffer persecution.—*Anon.*

### III. ITS INFLUENCING MOTIVE.

[15955] Our life and conduct is to be determined not by considerations of self-interest. The question which we should, from time to time, ask ourselves, is not—"Is this pleasant and the other distasteful?" but, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" "How can I best advance Thy glory and fulfil Thy purposes? Here am I completely at Thy disposal. If that which Thou callest me to do and to suffer is distasteful to my nature, that makes no difference; if it is pleasant, that makes no difference; I am not here to ask myself what I like and what I do not like; but I am here to go straight forward in the path Thy will has indicated for me, and if that path should entail sorrow and humiliation, and the loss of all things, it matters not to me so long as I can only 'win Christ and be found in Him.'" This, it seems to me, is the foundation stone upon which the edifice of our self-denial is to be erected.—*Rev. W. Hay Aitken.*

[15956] Some people seem to think that because self-sacrifice is a noble thing, everything in which self is given up must be noble. But we must look to the motive—Why is self given up? Besides, self may be sacrificed, when it ought to be maintained, and the sacrifice may be, not to make the sacrifice.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[15957] The Christian ascetic denied himself and sacrificed himself in the present life almost exclusively with a view to future happiness.

"Is selfishness, for time a sin,  
Stretched out into eternity celestial prudence?"

The whole system of self-denial and self-sacrifice in vogue during the middle ages was vitiated by the character of its ulterior motives. The good done to the poor by charity, the comfort it bestowed on them, was purely incidental. The real object of charity was the soul of the person exercising it. At the root of mendicancy, too, was the persuasion that in the future life the conditions of this life were to be entirely reversed; Lazarus was to lie in Abraham's bosom and Dives was to be tormented. The poor of this world were to be rich in that, and *vice versa*. These things should never be forgotten in our estimate of mediæval self-denial. They make it very certain that the real difference between the ascetics and the non-ascetics was largely intellectual rather than moral, a difference in the amount of faith, or shall we say credulity? Heine says of the Irish people, that they have such perfect faith in immortality that you could borrow money of them in this world on a promise to pay them in the other. St. Francis of Assisi,

and the men of his stamp, had a faith as strong as this in the happiness and glory to be won by poverty, fasting, and flagellation. It is no wonder, then, that they lived the ascetic life. If people nowadays believed asceticism to be such a good paying investment as St. Francis did, they would not hesitate to keep the vow of poverty. If "he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord" at such usurious rates of interest as no Stock Exchange bull or bear ever demanded, the more selfish and grasping a man is the more likely he will be to make such an investment.—*The Study*.

#### IV. ITS RELATION TO SELF-CULTURE.

##### 1 Self-denial is necessary to self-culture.

[15958] Before a child is many years old he ought, if possible, to be made to understand that this mortal life of ours is something more than a great playhouse; that there is real hard work that must be done, and the sooner it is done the better. Self-culture does not properly begin until these things are clearly apprehended. But the apprehension of these things means self-denial. It means that something must be given up for the sake of some other things, some pleasant things for the sake of some things which may not be immediately pleasant, but which are essential to the ultimate establishment of our right to be here on the planet enjoying the various benefits of existence. As soon as possible, every child should be made to know that as life is a perpetual receiving, it ought, in all fairness, and honesty, and decency, to be a perpetual giving.—*Ibid*.

##### 2 Self-culture is necessary to all true and noble exhibitions of self-denial.

[15959] There are exhibitions of self-sacrifice which are not noble, which are not beautiful. The history of the Christian Church is full of them. So is the history of both of the great Hindu religions. They proceed upon the foundation principle that God is a jealous God, that He is most happy when we are most miserable. Morality is doing what we don't want to. Religion is doing what we don't want to, because God wants us to, and so on. Paul said: "I beseech you that you present your bodies a living sacrifice." The Church has thought the less life they have in them the better.

"This frame so weak, sharp sickness' hue,  
And this pale cheek God loves in you;  
More faltering speech and weary days  
His heart will reach, than beauty's blaze."

A similar theory has been held concerning the mind. The less vigorous the better. The pride of intellect has been persistently rebuked. Sacrifice has meant mutilation of the body, of the mind, of the affections. Many a fond mother, thanks to her spiritual advisers and the inherited taint of centuries of such notions, still fancies that the good God has taken away her child because it was the idol of her heart. Such

notions of self-sacrifice as these do not, of course, necessitate self-culture. They have been its direct enemies. They will be as long as they endure. The self-sacrifice which necessitates self-culture is the consecration of our ennobled and perfected selves to whatever work our hands shall find to do. A famous recipe for cooking a hare begins with the injunction: "First catch your hare." It is a very wise injunction. It is capable of more than culinary application. Before you make your sacrifice first get your offering. Before you undertake to give anything have something to give. Self-culture is the means of self-possession. And we must possess ourselves before we can bestow ourselves. These are the true relations of self-culture and self-sacrifice rightly understood.—*Ibid*.

#### V. ITS REAL BLESSEDNESS AND INCREASING REWARD.

[15960] There will always be sorrow in the Christian experience; but no Christian can ever know what is meant by those two little words "always rejoicing" but the Christian who takes up his cross and follows Jesus. He finds that he is permitted to go after his Master. He has cast away his life; but lo! he discovers he has found it. He has turned his back upon himself, but there is a new self which has been communicated to him. The new Adam has taken the place of the old. New interests are thronging into his nature; new aspirations are rising within his heart; new joys are swelling within his soul; the whole man is being lifted up to a higher platform; all "old things are passed away," or are passing away, and all things are more and more becoming new.—*Rev. W. Hay Aitken*.

[15961] Through the days of his earthly pilgrimage the self-denying Christian is ever making further discoveries—"Oh, what a blessed thing the cross is!" He thought it a foe when first he saw it; he begins now to find a friend. Its weight seemed ready to crush him; but he has found that when the cross is heavy, that is just the time when Jesus comes near with friendly shoulder to bear our burden for us. And because the heavy cross brings us into closer fellowship with Jesus, we begin to love the very sorrows that thus yoke us together in a blessed union of suffering, and still more truly, in a blessed union of joy. And so we follow Him. "My sheep hear My voice: and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life." "I keep giving unto them eternal life;" for "if any man will lose his life, the same shall find it." He has turned his back upon the old life, but he finds the new is streaming more and more fully into his ransomed humanity; a tide of life from the cross of Calvary, the invincible powers of the resurrection fresh from the person of the Risen Lord.—*Ibid*.

[15962] The human will, as it is more and



more triumphed over, triumphs. For it is not that our service is involuntary, but that there takes place in our nature a voluntary surrender of all we call ours; and it is not that the new will is something distinct from our own; but it is that the new will becomes our own, and we find a joy in that which, first of all, we most shrunk from. We prove in our own blessed experience what is that "good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."—*Ibid.*

[15963] The great law of life is, that in self-denial is triumph; through suffering, success. The statement of Christ, so terse as to seem paradoxical—"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall save it"—is easily explained. Whosoever insists on clinging to that he prizes most on earth shall find in another world that he has lost it all. Whosoever will give up for My sake that he prizes most here, shall find hereafter that he has gained it. In other words, earth and heaven are presented in contrast. The physical life as earth's *summum bonum* is placed in opposition to the spiritual life, which commences on earth, and lasts for ever.—*Rev. A. P. Foster.*

[15964] "If any man will lose his life, the same shall find it." He shall "find it" even here on earth, as he makes the discovery which St. Paul made: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Ah! he has found his life there—life so deep, so pure, so holy, that it is already the life of heaven begun on earth. He shall "find it" more and more; "find it" amid conflicts and difficulties and trials. Every fresh trial shall make him "find it" still more by and by, as he passes into the world of life which lies beyond. And, blessed discovery! when we "find" our life, where is it? It is "hid with Christ in God." When we pass the threshold of the glory-world, and enter into the Father's presence, we shall find our "hidden life" as we gaze on the face of Him who is our life.—*Rev. W. Hay Aitken.*

[15965] At a distance self-denial seems hard, for thou seest its outer form, and canst not know how they who deny self gain the presence of God. It seems hard to part with things of time, yet only until thou knowest how God replaces them with foretastes of heaven. . . . The way of life seems a lonely way, but only till thou know how, to the lonely, Christ places Himself by their side. Hard is it to part with this life's destructive sweetness, but only till thou know the sweetness of the heavenly manna wherewith God feeds the inmost soul of those who choose Him. Hard is it to cross our own will, but only till we know the rest and peace of having no will but only His. Trust thyself really and wholly to take the few first earnest steps along the narrow way, and by God's grace thou wilt never leave it; trust thyself with Him who first trod it for thee, and He will smoothe it to thee. Blessed will it be there to tread where

are the footmarks of thy Redeemer. Blessed there to tread where the enemy shall have no power to hurt thee, but He will "give thee power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and all the power of the enemy." Blessed to be there where thy footsteps shall not, as thou goest, gather the mire of this earth, but shall be washed with the blood of Him who tracked the way for thee; blessed to be where thou shalt be borne on His arms, thou shalt rest thine aching head on His bosom, thou shalt hear within thee His guiding voice, and all thine own emotions shall be quelled and quieted by His peace.—*Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D.*

#### VI. ITS PERFECT EXEMPLIFICATION BY CHRIST, AS REGARDS BOTH PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE.

[15966] How did Christ deny Himself? Was He an ascetic? No. "John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking: the Son of Man came eating and drinking." Did He ever fast? Yes. And when, and why? When He had a very definite object in doing so: or when He did so in pursuance of the Divine direction. Did He ever exclude Himself from society? Yes: but why? Sometimes to spend a short season in prayer: sometimes a whole night, so that He might prepare for some serious conflict with the forces of hell, or that He might fit Himself for doing some special work, as when He was about to name His twelve Apostles. There was an object in these outward acts of self-denial. Had He a comfortable home? He had a comfortable home opened to Him down there at Bethany, not that it was His own, but they waited on Him there with all the assiduity of love, and I have no doubt they made Him very comfortable. Had He ever an uncomfortable home? Frequently, indeed, He had no home at all. "The foxes have holes; the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Why was that? Because there was something meritorious in it? Because the actual suffering connected with such a wandering life was in itself pleasing to the mind of an unsympathetic God? If that had been the case, Jesus of Nazareth would have mounted the pillar of a Simon Stylites, and spent His days in fasting and His nights in pain. Not so. Why did He do it? Because He must be "about His Father's business." The inner nature had to be supreme over the outer; and the body had to be the willing servant of the willing soul. Did He ever lacerate His own body? Never. Do we ever find Him going out of His way to inflict inconvenience upon Himself? Never. Do we ever find Him turning His back upon the agreeable, merely because it was the agreeable? Some said He was "a gluttonous man"—not that He was so, but they dared to say so: had He not been like other people, they never would have said so. When He went to the Pharisee's house, He was not like some of our modern ascetics, who have a little cold toast laid on the table while others are eating a sump-

tuous dinner. He was just like other people: there was nothing to distinguish Him in these respects from other people.—*Rev. W. Hay Aitken.*

[15967] From beginning to end the external asceticism which characterized mediæval Christianity was altogether wanting in the life of Jesus. From beginning to end the spiritual asceticism which St. Paul subsequently practised so successfully—"I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection"—was continually exhibited in His conduct. He presented to the view of all a *body that was under the control of the mind, and a mind that was under the control of God*. Had He no sufferings? A great many. Had He no pain? Greater than ever was borne. How was this? He bore pain with an object. He suffered because He had a purpose in view. How was it inflicted? Did He bring it upon Himself? Nay, verily. He never courted pain. How did it come? It came in the fulfilment of the Father's will. It came because He would cleave to the path which the Father had laid down for Him. The cross lay in His way, and He took it up: He didn't go to look for one: He did not manufacture one for Himself: but there it lay in His way, and He raised it. It was a heavier cross than ever we shall be called upon to bear—a cross so heavy, that His frail, human nature sank beneath its load; the tender-hearted women who watched Him toiling up to Golgotha with that terrible burden, burst into tears as they saw the Man of Sorrows pass by, as they watched His tottering steps, and beheld Him sinking under the fearful burden.—*Ibid.*

[15968] When Christ fasted, it was for a purpose, and in direct obedience to an inward leading of the Holy Spirit; not to expiate His sin, for He had none to expiate; nor to extinguish His natural propensities, for these had no evil in them; but to brace Himself up for some special work which lay before Him; to arm Himself for the conflict of life. But it may be argued, and it not unfrequently is, that our blessed Lord can scarcely be regarded as an example that it will be safe for us to follow in this respect, because His humanity was pure and sinless, whereas ours is infected by the principle of evil. That carnal mind which, our Article tells us, continues to exist, even in the regenerate, was wholly absent from Him, and therefore it might be necessary for us to adopt means, in dealing with temptations which have their source in this principle of evil present within our nature, such as were wholly unnecessary in His case. To this I reply, Our blessed Lord in His human life is expressly set before us as an example. He lived to show us how we are to live. We have no right to believe that that example was in any respect defective. When once we begin to draw our conclusions from the consideration of the inherent disparity between His character and ours, we there and then lose all power of gaining practical lessons from His example, the life of Christ becomes an object which we may admire,

but can no longer think of imitating, and this is surely to sacrifice one of the great results of the incarnation. We may be sure that He who submitted to baptism for the sake of fulfilling all righteousness, not because He required it, but in order that He might be an example to us, would also have submitted to self-inflicted austerities, if these had been necessary for us. Possibly this difficulty, arising from the sinless character of Christ, may be more apparent than real; for while it is true that He had no taint of sin, we have to set against this consideration the fact that no human subject was ever so set upon by Satan, so exposed to all the malice of hell, as was our blessed Lord. Against Him were concentrated all those forces which are only in part brought to bear upon us; and if He was possessed of exceptional purity, He was also exposed to exceptional temptation. Take as an illustration the first temptation to which our blessed Lord was exposed in the wilderness. It is quite true that our blessed Lord could never have known, in His own person, the force of unholy passion, or have been swayed by the mighty tide of uncontrolled lust; but who shall say that the physical cravings induced by forty days of abstinence may not have been stronger, as a natural force acting in the way of temptation, than any morbid craving of a confirmed sensualist can ever have been, in the whole course of human history? In each case we contemplate a human subject affected by a physical appetite. In the one case, the appetite is natural and lawful; in the other case, self-created, at any rate, self-developed and impure; but in both cases the appetite finds itself opposed to the Divine will. Was it less of a victory in the Son of Man to rise above the agonies of a forty days' hunger, than it is in a reformed sensualist to rise above the demands of an appetite to which he has allowed himself to become the slave?—*Ibid.*

## VII. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF SELF-DENIAL.

### 1 Self-conquest, or temperance.

#### (1) *Its requirements.*

[15969] Besides the absolute subjection of all evil passions and propensities, the law of temperance requires that those natural desires which are in themselves innocent and lawful, should, both as to the manner and the measure of their indulgence, be regulated by a regard for the highest good of the soul.—*J. P. Thompson.*

#### (2) *Means of its attainment.*

[15970] In order to gain self-control we must study ourselves, especially as to our weak points of character, and aim to conquer specific modes or habits of evil to which we are prone. The apostle speaks of "the sin which doth so easily beset us;" and every one who is accustomed to study his heart, finds some point at which Satan works with special facility.—*Ibid.*

#### (3) *Considerations influencing to its practice.*

[15971] Consider what it is to gain the mastery over a single passion. And think, also, what it

is for the mind to be ruled by an appetite! Look at Coleridge—a poet who might have sung for all time, a philosopher capable of teaching and moulding generations, skulking away from the eye of friends and of servants to drink his bottle of laudanum, and then bewailing his weakness and sin with an agony the bare recital of which makes our hearts bleed for pity. Think of the poets, the statesmen, the warriors, who have sunk under the inebriating cup, and have left a dishonoured name. And as you mourn over the melancholy ruin of greatness by appetite and passion, think how great it is to master these; to subject all passions and desires to the wise and sound control of reason acting for Jove. It is not only to subdue a serpent, to tame a lion—there is a whole menagerie of evil passions to be kept in subjection. “Every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind; but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” The grace that can subdue tongue, and thought, and heart to the mild constraint of love, is the very power of God.—*Ibid.*

[See Vol. III., Section X. (“VIRTUES”), Art. “Temperance,” p. 283.]

## 2 Fasting accompanied by prayer.

(1) *Its requisite characteristics and motives.* [15972] Fasting is, in the Christian sense, a result of ardent devotional feeling, or of deep sorrow already existing.—*L. H. Wiseman.*

[15973] He that fasts only to tame a rebellious body, when he is provided of a remedy either in grace or nature, may be tempted to leave off his fasting; but he that in his fast intends the mortification of every unruly appetite, and accustoming himself to bear the yoke of the Lord, a contempt of the pleasures of meat and drink, humiliation of all wilder thoughts, obedience and humility, austerity and charity, and the convenience and assistance to devotion, and to do an act of repentance; whatever happens, will have reason enough to make him to continue his purpose, and to sanctify it.—*Bp. Jeremy Taylor.*

[15974] Men accused in times past were wont humbly to abase themselves before the judge, with long beards, uncombed hair, and black array, that they might secure his mercy. So when pestilence, famine, or war begin to rage, or any calamity hangs over us, it becomes us to present ourselves in piteous array, with fasting, and prayer, before the Judge of all the earth, that His anger may be turned away from us (Cawdray). But no amount of fasting will do without true penitence. Lifeless repentance is fruitless. No outward propriety and offerings will wash away the stain of sin. We must not only confess but forsake our sins and turn unto God. God will have mercy upon the penitent.—*J. Wolfendale.*

[15975] Is this a fast, to keep  
The larder lean  
And clean  
From fat of veals and sheep?

Is it to quit the dish  
Of flesh, yet still  
To fill  
The platter high with fish?

Is it to fast an hour,  
Or ragged to go,  
Or show  
A downcast look, or snore?

No; 'tis a fast to dole  
Thy sheaf of wheat  
And meat  
Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,  
From old debate  
And hate,  
To circumcise thy life.

To show a heart grief-rent,  
To starve thy sin,  
Not bin;  
And that's to keep thy Lent.

—*Robert Herrick.*

(2) *The value and efficacy of fasting and prayer.*

[15976] Fasting and prayer are the great barriers to keep out all temptations of intemperance and sin from the minds of men.—*Bp. Barry.*

[15977] By fasting, the body learns to obey the soul; by praying, the soul learns to command the body.—*W. Secker.*

[15978] Fasting is one of those spiritual weapons of our warfare which are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Its profit, therefore, is first of all as a means of self-discipline and penitential sanctification; and secondly, as an instrument of power, for the overthrow of Satan's kingdom. The more we practise detachment from the world by mortification of our earthly members, the more shall we find that God will make manifest within us the powers of the new life.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

(3) *Objections to the practice, and excuses for its neglect.*

[15979] The objections of those who would set fasting entirely aside are plainly opposed to the law of nature and of revelation. They are based upon the grounds of formalism and self-righteousness, as if fasting must tend to these results, and must consequently be at variance with the spirit of Christianity. It will at once be seen that fasting is no more a formality than prayer. All acts must be regulated and formal if they are to be habitual and real. Our sense of contrition demands a form of expression as much as our sense of need. . . . The



acts for which we have to repent are acts involving our whole body. The body must humble itself for its sin, and the repudiation of fasting is indeed a denial of the great truth that our body is a part of ourselves. If the body is here an instrument of sin, and is to be a partaker of the joy of the soul in the glory of the resurrection, it is plainly necessary that the body should be united with the soul in the humiliation of penitence. The charge of self-righteousness, moreover, holds good only against the *abuse* of fasting. . . . Self-righteousness would have been as great an evil in Jewish days as in the present day, but we do not find that Daniel, or Anna, or St. John Baptist fell into self-righteousness by the greatness of their fasts.—*Ibid.*

(4) *Modern impediments to this form of self-denial.*

Luxuriousness and nervous excitement.

[15980] Probably the luxuriousness of modern times is one great reason why the constitution of men seems to be less equal to fasting than it formerly was, and the exaggerated nervous excitement of the present day is another great reason why so much difficulty is experienced in this matter. They who would fast for the love of God must learn to rest in the love of God. Eagerness and anxiety eat out the enduring powers of nature, whereas reliance upon God in tranquil devotion has a natural tendency, in addition to its spiritual power, to give permanent healthy action to the vital organs. Eastern Christendom still observes fasts to an extent which appears incredible in the West. In all probability this is owing to the greater absence of political fermentation and social struggle in Eastern countries. Our rapid locomotion, the constant interchange of thought through the medium of the press, the zest with which all classes claim their share in political power, the loss of God's blessed ordinance of manual labour by the adaptation of machinery to all sorts of production, the undue strain of the intelligence necessitated in consequence, the artificial wants which our over-hasty productiveness occasions, the exaggerated attention to merely intellectual development in the education of children—these may be suggested as causes why the human being of modern Western Europe should be less able to fast than were our forefathers, or than contemporary Christians, and even Mohammedans in the East. It is well to bear this in mind, for it will help to make individuals realize the great necessity of *forming habits of prayer and inward tranquil devotion to all their attempts at fasting.*—*Ibid.*

[See Article "Abstemiousness," Vol. III., Section X. ("VIRTUES"), p. 288.]

VIII. GRANDEUR OF THE SELF-DENIAL  
PRACTISED BY ST. PAUL.

[15981] St. Paul, along with us, inherited a sinful nature, and was exposed to all those forms  
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of temptation with which we are ourselves familiar; yet he also stands before us as a model of self-denial, and is able to call upon us to be imitators of him, as he was of Christ. No one can question the self-denial of the Apostle's life—it is certainly one of its most prominent features. All are familiar with the wonderful description he gives of his own sufferings in 2 Cor. xi. Here was indeed a life of self-denial, and self-denial voluntarily undergone. He must have escaped all this had he been content to lead the easy, quiet, sluggish life which so many Christians of our own day lead. Had he kept his religion to himself, he might probably have lived in comfort, if not in luxury, in his own land, enjoying the good things of this life, and solacing himself with the hope of immortality; but he preferred to endure hardship as a good soldier. And yet this very man speaks disparagingly of mere bodily austerities. Bodily austerity, he tells us (and the word which he employs in the original is that from which we derive the term "asceticism"), profiteth little. In the Epistle to the Colossians he speaks of those who neglected or were unsparing of their bodies as missing the mark of Christian experience; and yet we find himself asserting that he kept under his body, and brought it into subjection.—*Rev. W. Hay Aiken.*

[15982] In 1 Cor. ix. 4, 5, 6, St. Paul indicates three special respects in which he had turned aside from, and deafened his ear against, the reasonable demands of nature, for his work's sake. "Have we not power to eat and to drink?"—that is to say, he might have secured for himself a regular and sure supply of the necessities of life. By a little contrivance and forecast, by exercising the authority to which he had perfect right within the church, he might have assured himself of a comfortable competence. Once again: he asks, "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?" He might have surrounded himself with all the pleasures of domestic life; and to a warm and sympathetic nature, such as his, the sacrifice of this must have been no small matter. The generous and affectionate nature will ever seek human affection, and surely this cannot be wrong! Once again: he asks, "Have not Barnabas and I power to forbear working?" It certainly did seem reasonable that one who worked so hard for the souls of men should be saved from the additional weariness of physical toil. Now in each of these cases you will observe how plausible the argument by which a self-indulgent course might have been defended. In the first place, once and for all, it may be laid down clearly and emphatically that the Apostle would have been morally justified in adopting any or all of these courses. Neither of them contained anything wrong in itself—all of them might have been amply justified by recognized precedents. There was even more than this to be pleaded on the side of adopting a course that would have administered to the

gratification of the body. How easy it would have been for St. Paul to argue that a person in his position ought to be properly supported by the Churches which he had founded: that justice to the cause in which he was engaged demanded that a life so precious as his should be properly cared for; that it was important that his mind should be left free and unembarrassed from worldly cares, in order that he might the better pursue the great work to which he was devoted—nay, he might have argued that he would be doing his converts a positive injustice if he failed to enforce upon their minds their obligations in this respect; he would be training them to selfishness and inconsiderateness, and rendering the ultimate establishment of the Church more difficult than it otherwise need be. He might well have pleaded, amidst his exhausting labours, and the persecutions to which he was exposed, that the soothing influence of domestic affection was almost essential—that his work would be better done, and his body better cared for, and thus his usefulness extended, if he were to adopt the course which others had pursued—to establish for a season, in each of the localities which he had visited, the pleasure and the comforts of home. Not less forcibly he might have urged that there were better things for him to do than to waste his time in making tents. Imagine the Apostle returning to his humble home worn with the toil of his laborious ministry, after having testified publicly, and from house to house, repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! Imagine him engaged, early and late, in his great and all-important work of saving souls, and then, already weary, laying down his copy of the Scriptures, to take up the needle and the awl, and to toil for long hours at a manual occupation which any common mechanic might have performed as well as he! How plausibly he might have argued, Surely this cannot be the intention of God! In my intervals of rest from spiritual labour, I require time for study, and for prayer; and now my life is one long toil—when I am not preaching, I am tent-making; when I am not tent-making, I am preaching. Have I not a Divine ordinance at my back, if I adopt an opposite course? Has not the Lord Himself ordained that they who preach the gospel should live on the gospel? Does not Moses himself teach that the ox which treads out the corn is not to be muzzled? Why should I lead any longer this life of hardships and of toil? So he might have reasoned; and what had he to set against all these specious arguments, backed as they were by the natural and reasonable demands of a body that rebelled against hardship and suffering, and that naturally loved ease and repose as much as do our own? All that he had to set against it was his work, and the will of God in that work. He was engaged in a great warfare, and his feeling was—“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”—*Ibid.*

[15983] Against the demands of his body—

against the plausible arguments which might be heard on the side of innocent self-indulgence, St. Paul set his jealousy for the Master's glory, his fixed determination that the cause of Christ should never suffer by any course of conduct that he might pursue. To accept the subsidies which would have been offered by the churches, to surround himself with the comforts of home, might give occasion to those who looked with suspicion upon the nascent faith, to regard it as a monetary enterprise set on foot by the cunning and cupidity of unprincipled Jews. So far as lay in him, there should never be any cause for such a reproach; and when he found his own body rising up against the course of hardships which he voluntarily preferred for himself; when nature urged, as nature will, her demands for some degree of consideration; just as our blessed Lord discovered Satan in the person of His favourite disciple, when that disciple dissuaded Him from the cross, so the Apostle discovered a foe in his own flesh, when that flesh shrank from the path of self-denial and suffering; and gathering all the mighty powers of his spiritual life into the blow, he smote his antagonist down, and consigned it to its own proper place; from henceforth thou art to dictate thy terms no longer; thou art slave, and not master! Fulfil thy work, but dare not to assert thy authority!—*Ibid.*

#### IX. THE RETRIBUTION INVOLVED IN A NEGLECT OF THIS DUTY.

[15984] Do those nails seem so sharp, that thorny crown so terrible, that spear so pointed, that darkness so heavy? Stay for a moment, while you listen to these solemn words: “What is a man profited if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” You are running away from the cross; but there is a cross being prepared for you. Remember that the cross was the instrument of a felon's execution; and while you are flying away from the unfriendly shadow, behind the veil there is a ghastlier cross being erected for you. You are asserting your own will, you are loving your own life. You shall “lose it;” and lose it by your own irrational self-love. You have elected to live for yourself: you are running after what you conceive, in your own blindness and self-deception, to be your own self-interest. Do you not find, even now, oh child of the world! that your self-interest is deluding you? The bubbles you grasp burst in your hand; the flowers you gather fade at your touch: as you go along life's journey, you are conscious of the approach—ever becoming more and more terrible—of a cloud of darker sorrow, while the present sense of blank disappointment becomes more and more appalling! Years creep on upon you; the effect of age is felt; the body is shattered as you near the end of your journey; the human strength decays; the joys of life are withered, and one by one, as your earthly possessions slip from your grasp—then, what then? “Woe unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him, for the reward

of his hands shall be given unto him." You have fled from suffering into the arms of suffering. You have endeavoured to escape from the cross, you find your portion in the cross in the retribution of the future. Thus it is that the man prepares his own doom, and is himself the creator of his own misery.—*Ibid.*

## X. FALSE THEORIES RESPECTING SELF-DENIAL.

### 1 The propitiatory theory.

*Based upon the idea that there is something meritorious in self-denial, which has a power to atone for sin.*

[15985] It is just when we begin to yearn after the likeness of Christ, and to long to be conformed to His image, when we begin to see clearly that the path which the Saviour trod was one of humiliation and reproach, and that there are plenty of sorrows to be borne, and plenty of difficulties to be battled with—it is just then that Satan will, if he can, pervert this new-born light arising within our soul, and endeavour to turn that very light into darkness. And he has succeeded only too well in former ages, and in our own, in diverting these religious instincts into a wrong and a mischievous channel. If we look back upon the page of Church history, how much of wasted energy, how much of usefulness lost—how many lives blighted—may be traced up to a misunderstanding of what our blessed Lord meant by that one word self-denial! Nay, we may say that vast systems have been built upon this foundation-stone, the ruins of which remain at the present day, which would never have been erected at all if the Christian intellect had only grasped the ideal of self-denial which is actually presented to us in the gospel.—*Ibid.*

[15986] There have been some who have fallen into the error of thinking that in some way or other self-denial has to do with the expiation of our guilt; that the offering of a life of self-denial is a kind of satisfaction to be made to God for all the sins and all the imperfections of human nature. You cannot accept a theory of this kind without its producing at once its natural effect upon your own experience, which will become then and there intensely legal. For your very self-denial will be submitted to in the spirit of bondage; it will be the sufferings of a slave, and of a felon, and not the willing undergoing of hardship on the part of a reconciled and rejoicing child. Bodily austerity,—the mortification of our own natural proclivities, the turning away from all that is pleasant, because we think that we don't deserve to enjoy anything,—and the tribute of a life of pain and sorrow that ought to be offered to God in order to make up for the sins and shortcomings of the past—all this is simply a reflection upon the perfection of the work which has been performed for you and me upon Calvary. If the work of the Lord Jesus Christ was not complete,—if the

expiation was not sufficient,—then it is only reasonable that we should endeavour to add to it: but if the work has been completed, and if the expiation has been accepted and has been sealed with the approbation of the everlasting God; then to add anything more in the way of expiation is simply to cast a slur upon His love, and to impute imperfection to that which His dying lips declared to be "finished." This view of self-denial, I need hardly say, obtained to a very large extent in mediæval times, and gave a severity to the tone of Christian experience, which ultimately developed into the extravagances of monastic asceticism.—*Ibid.*

### 2 The stoical theory.

*Based upon the idea that there is something radically wrong in pleasure.*

[15987] It is assumed that we are not intended to enjoy pleasure here. Now, this is simply a new edition of the ancient lie which was suggested by the great tempter to our first parents in Paradise. "Hath God indeed said that ye shall not eat of the trees of the garden?" He has placed you in Eden, surrounded you with delights, amid all these varied trees, and all these delicious and charming fruits: and does that God whom you call your Father exhibit any fatherly tenderness towards you in precluding you from the natural gratification of an appetite He has Himself created? How hard must that Father be! How little sympathy there can be in His nature! Can you serve, love, confide in such a God? This was the venom which was first of all infused into the soul of our first parents. And when such a conception is received, even though it may seem to produce the effect of an austere, or self-denying life, it will necessarily have the effect of interfering with our relationships with God. I do not believe it is possible for us to have the full, simple, calm, filial love, which a child ought to have for its parents, towards our God, if we are cramped by these notions of His mode of dealing with us. If we believe He has set us in the midst of enjoyment, and yet rendered enjoyment itself criminal, we can scarcely believe He is the beneficent Being that otherwise we should naturally assume Him to be. And when our views of the character of God are in any way interfered with, and we begin to entertain a false idea of Him, our whole religious life must suffer from it, because the knowledge of God is the great source both of power and of enjoyment throughout the whole course of our spiritual experience. There is nothing wrong in pleasure in itself; on the contrary, God has "given us all things richly to enjoy."—*Ibid.*

[15988] I remember hearing of one of the holy persons who bore the name of "saints" in mediæval times, who found that the most exquisite delight of her life lay in deeds of charity. At last she came to the conclusion that she must allow herself such a pleasure no longer, because her joy was too full. Hence she would give away no more alms to the poor



for fear she should enjoy the pleasure attached to such acts of charity. So far may this pernicious theory be carried! Now, I mean to say that the thought suggested to our minds by the word is not that we should watch our natural inclinations just that we may thwart them, but that we should begin by turning our backs upon ourselves—if I may use such a phrase; in other words, that self should no longer be the central point around which our lives revolve. "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again."—*Ibid.*

[15989] There are abundant opportunities for self-denial. If a man is going to place the higher part of his nature uppermost, he will have business enough on hand. He will not need to go into the wilderness to deny himself. And to go alone into the wilderness is no safeguard against evil. A man never went into the wilderness in this world that the devil did not go with him. In the city the devil has so much to do that he cannot pay much attention to any one man, but in the wilderness he has you! It is a bad plan to keep by yourself too much. When you are under wholesome excitements in life, when you are made to vibrate and respond to genial influences, these things help you on toward self-denial.—*Ward Beecher.*

### 3 The Manichean theory.

*Based upon the idea that the body and our material system are the seat and centre of evil, and therefore should in every way be mortified.*

[15990] It may be asked, with reference to the passage, 1 Cor. ix. 27, does the apostle mean to teach us by this expression that the body, being a material substance and therefore closely connected with the material world, is the source of all inward evil? In a word, did the apostle anticipate Gnostic speculations? and does his attitude towards the material part of his nature open abstruse conclusions with respect to the necessary evils of matter? Nothing of the kind! On the contrary, no man exalts the human body more. He represents it as the "temple of the Holy Ghost." "Your bodies," he says, "are the members of Christ." He prays that our body, as well as our spirit and soul, may be preserved faultless; he speaks of our bodies being presented as a living sacrifice; he tells us that he bears in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ; he expresses his confidence that Christ shall be magnified in his body, and calls upon us to glorify God in our bodies as well as in our spirits. . . . It could not have been because of any theory of the necessary and natural impurity of the body he employed this language, or assumed the attitude towards his body which his language represents, . . . but he makes a discovery which all of us will necessarily make sooner or later—that the war with the powers of evil without must ever be accompanied by a corresponding and co-existent struggle within, in our own personal experience. He who would conquer

a world must be ready to conquer himself, and he will find that the grace and power of God will only be triumphant without as they are triumphant within. Here lies the explanation of the rapid transition from the description of his extraordinary conflicts to a reference to his personal experiences.—*Rev. W. Hay Aitken.*

[15991] We speak of the crucifixion of our passions. In one sense, so far as a sinful indulgence of them is concerned, they are to be crucified and slain; but in no other sense are they to be slain. We are to use them so that there will be no need of crucifying them. For there is not one primary desire or appetite in the human system that was put there to be taken out again. Everything that is in a man was put in him for no other reason than because it was necessary to the symmetry of the whole; and the attempt to crucify any of our normal, lawful desires is an attempt to mutilate God's perfect work. We have a right to every one of our appetites and passions; and that, not for suppression, but for use, so that we use them in subordination to the higher moral sentiments and affections.—*Ward Beecher.*

### XI. HOMILETICAL REMARKS AND APPLICATIONS.

[15992] This demand of self-denial is "a hard saying;" let me, therefore, remind you of some facts that explain and justify it. (1) It is not an unusual demand. The price of all success is self-denial. *E.g.*, the athlete, the man of business, the student. (2) It is not an arbitrary demand; it is not something which Christ imposes upon us as a mark of His authority, or as a proof of our devotion to Him. It is grounded in the fact that our nature is corrupt and our bias wrong. Therefore there must be self-denial, or there will be ruin. (3) It is the indispensable condition of present happiness. (a) It saves us from much misery. Remember what are the results of self-indulgence. (b) It brings much joy, self-control, inward peace, the ultimate approval of our fellow-men, the constant approval of God. Self-denial is thus only one side of the Christian life. (4) The path of the Cross is the only path to the Crown. This was true in the case of Christ; and it is true in the case of all His followers. Only thus can they be prepared for future glory. The refining influences of self-denial and suffering. Only on those who have borne the cross would it be fitting to bestow the crown. But it shall be theirs. "And glittering robes for conquerors wait." It is the hope of future gain that reconciles men in every department of life to self-denial; and this the Christian has above all other men.—*Anon.*

[15993] If any would deny self, let them—(1) Lessen their esteem and affection for worldly things. Affection follows esteem. A man is not much troubled at breaking an earthen pitcher, because he knows it to be of little

value. Remember the noble example of Moses (Heb. xi. 25). (2) Make not any creature the chief spring of happiness and trust; carnal men depend upon a candle, which is soon blown out; the children of God have the sun, which is above the reach of wind and storm (Hab. ii. 17, 18). (3) Consider the right God hath to all that we have naturally as His creatures, and still more by redemption, as new creatures; and shall we refuse to yield what properly belongs to Him? (4) Believe the pure happiness there is in the heart wholly set upon God. We need not weaken our affections, but change the object; and we shall find purer pleasure, sweeter enjoyment, more dependable expectations than can be had in the indulgence of self. (5) Frequently look forward to the great reward. Heaven will make up for all we can lose here. If we dwell in heaven now, the temptations of earth will be seen in their true reality. (6) Remember what great things the Lord Jesus has given up for us; and the little things we often refuse to give up for Him!—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[15994] Our superfluities should be given up for the convenience of others. Our conveniences should give place to the necessities of others. And even our necessities give way to the extremities of the poor.—*John Howard.*

[15995] The self-denying man takes the absolute and changeless as his standard, the good one as his mark of imitation. In all the relationships, in all the duties of life, he is moved by powers beyond the reach of earth's perturbations; each duty will be fulfilled with an energy and a constancy which is the true moral sublimity; men bow—they cannot help it—to him whose springs are in the Lord. Such men stand with rock-like firmness; they move with invincible force. They are felt to be powers, and they know themselves to be blessings, in proportion as they have yielded themselves a living sacrifice to God. That which has been through many fires has an edge and hardness which cannot otherwise be attained. And the MEN of the human race—the men who have opened the deepest springs of their being; through whose inner cells the floods of the universal life is rushing; who are glad with a joy that can know no abatement, and strong with a strength which can know no decay; the men of duty, who are prompt for every service, the salt of the selfish, corrupting world: the beacon lights to keep clear the track to God and glory—are the men who have penetrated the apostle's meaning, and have presented their bodies a living sacrifice to God.—*Rev. J. Baldwin Brown.*

[15996] We are striving for the mastery—fighting the battle of the good in a world which has been invaded and devastated by the evil. Do we not find (how frequently!) that our bodies rise up and resist the claims made on them by the circumstances by which we are surrounded, and the work which has to be done? It may be

perhaps, with us, rather in little things that the conflict has to be waged. Shall I give a few homely examples? You know that there are sick and poor to be visited in your district, and that you ought to be at your work. Love for souls and for God would prompt you to set forth; but it is a cold, wintry day, everything outside looks cheerless and uncomfortable—you are sitting at a blazing fire in your easy-chair, deeply engrossed in an interesting biography. How the body pleads, Sit still, don't disturb yourself; another day will do as well as to-day. Fifty reasons suggest themselves in a few moments to your mind why you should defer your work to another occasion; and when once you begin to confer with flesh and blood, how soon these carry the day! Or perhaps it is so small a matter as rising from your bed in the morning sufficiently early to give yourself time for prayer and the study of God's word. We have almost left off singing that old-fashioned hymn of Heber's—

“Shake off dull sloth, and early rise  
To pay thy morning sacrifice.”

Is it because dull sloth has ceased to be a power? or because too many of us have ceased to think of shaking him off? Or perhaps it is your time for prayer in the evening, after the busy day of toil;—how heavy and drowsy you feel! and the body suggests that you should lounge at ease in such an attitude that in a few minutes stupor and something like torpor may not unnaturally be expected to supervene, and by and by you will flatter yourself you have prayed, when you have really slept. Or perhaps it is—if you have a call to visit the haunts of wretchedness and misery, where everything is repulsive—the close and fetid odour of those miserable hovels, the sights and sounds of those filthy back streets: how nature shrinks from them all, and pleads with you to discover some less obnoxious task! These are occasions on which we too have to arm our right hand with spiritual power, and to smite our body down, forcibly reminding it of its true position.—*Rev. W. Hay Aitken.*

[15997] Perhaps the body asserts itself not so much by forbidding the painful as by suggesting the pleasant—now appealing to our lower appetites with suggestions of indulgences, possibly innocent in themselves, but perilous to our souls, just because they have been suggested; for this, as it seems to me, is what the Apostle means when he calls upon us to make no provision for the flesh. The mind that is taken up in any degree with the thought, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? is making provision for the flesh, and in doing so is unconsciously resigning its true supremacy; the body is dictating to the soul instead of the soul controlling the body. The same thing is true of those higher forms of gratification which none the less have the body as their subject. There is no harm in enjoying

the pleasures of the eye, or of the ear, yet the Christian who lays himself out to obtain such enjoyment will find that in thus making provision for the flesh he is really checking the flow of the higher life within his soul, and interfering with the full enjoyment of spiritual experience. —*Ibid.*

[15998] The pleasure in itself may be perfectly innocent, but as soon as we give ourselves over to it, as it were, it becomes guilty, because it intrudes itself between us and God, and occupies an amount of attention which has to be withdrawn from higher considerations. If God throws an innocent pleasure in our way, we are not called upon to suspect the gift because it is a pleasure; but when we go out of our way to pursue the pleasurable—whatever form it may assume—the higher part of our nature is already yielding itself as the slave of the lower, the body is already becoming the tyrant of the mind, and by and by we shall prove *how little real pleasure is to be found by those who live to please themselves.*—*Ibid.*

## WORSHIP AND ADORATION.

### I. MEANING OF THE TERM "WORSHIP."

[15999] The word—to worship, means to stoop and bow down the body with external gestures;—to serve in the work. But to worship God in spirit is the service and honour of the heart; it comprehends faith and fear in God. The worshipping of God is two-fold—outward and inward.—*Luther.*

### II. NATURE AND TRUE IDEA OF WORSHIP AND ADORATION.

[16000] Worship is man's highest end, for it is the employment of his highest faculties and affections on the sublimest object.—*W. E. Channing.*

[16001] Spiritual worship is enlightened; it is the result of knowledge; it perceives and rejoices in its object; it takes hold of a promise, or fixes on a precept; it must be the result of faith, for faith sees the great Invisible; it must be the kindling of the Holy Spirit.—*Lessey.*

[16002] To worship God in spirit and in truth is not merely to praise God in sincerity of lips and of heart. Worship implies that the sovereignty of God is recognized in ideality; but what is of importance is to recognize it in reality. God is truly recognized as a sovereign only when we have submitted our will to His by an unreserved obedience. Would it be worship only to proclaim His greatness, His power, and not to subordinate our thoughts to His thoughts, our designs to His designs? Whoever does not surrender himself without reserve to the Sovereign of our hearts, and place himself in abso-

lute dependence on Him, crying out, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth," does not know what worship is. It is easy to be moved, touched, and to surrender one's self to enthusiasm; it is easy to break out in praises; to bow the head is nothing. What is difficult, what costs and demands an energetic effort, is to bend one's will, to break it even when it revolts or exalts itself; but also at that price alone has the sovereignty of God been maintained and adoration been sincere. What I mean, is, that the essence of worship is *sacrifice*; for as regards us Christians, always incomplete, who feel selfishness and pride mixed in the blood of our veins, the accomplishment of the Divine will cannot be an impulse; there are continual conflicts between our desires and that thrice-holy will, and the conflict can cease only when we have triumphed over ourselves; it is a constant, painful struggle, and one which demands the most energetic effort. Who will say how many inward combats, how many tears, a complete surrender to what God demands of us costs? That is why at the centre of our worship, as of ancient worship, we still find sacrifice. The spiritual sacrifice, whose altar is invisible, is much more real than that which it took the place of.—*Dr. De Pressensé.*

[16003] What is it to worship? To worship is to tremble at the feeling of one's littleness and nothingness as a creature, to admire the greatness and majesty of the Most High; it is plunging with dazzled eye into His glory, to veil one's face before the abyss of infinite perfection; it is to recognize there with a burning heart infinite charity, boundless love; it is to be overwhelmed, thunderstruck, by that grandeur and that love; or, to speak more correctly, it is, before that grandeur of eternal love, to throw one's self prostrate on the ground, and strike up a song of thanksgiving, a song which springs up again of itself from eternity to eternity, because the gratitude will never equal the benefit. That adoration is the law of the creature so far as it is a creature. The seraph placed highest in heaven—he who was called the archangel Gabriel—or the most honoured human creature—she who was called Mary, the mother of Christ—will never be able to become prostrate enough before the throne of God. The angels veil themselves with their wings before His face, while they cry: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord." To what depth oughtest thou therefore to abase thyself in worship, O thou who art not an angel, nor a seraph, O man! creature of a day, and fallen, loaded with sins and yet pardoned! What fire should inflame thy heart, O thou who hast seen thy God—the God before whom the heaven of heavens is prostrate—descend even to thee, and save thee by the most astonishing sacrifice! What an echo ought that song of the blessed hosts to awake in thee! That holy God has pardoned, raised up, sanctified thee. Adore in the dust, and let the sigh of thy penitent heart rise up to Him like the perfume which is exhaled from a bruised plant.—*Ibid.*



[16004] Adoration is devout emotion awakened by the thought of what Jehovah *is*—the praise of the Divine perfections.—*Dr. J. Hamilton.*

[16005] Adoration is a state of soul that can only be expressed by song.—*Prof. Vinet.*

[16006] Adoration is a universal sentiment : it differs in degree in different natures ; it takes the most varied forms—often ignores its own existence ; sometimes it betrays itself by an exclamation uttered from the heart in the midst of the grand scenes of nature and life ; sometimes it rises silently in the mute and penetrated soul ; it may wander in its mode of expression, and err as to its object.—*V. Cousin.*

### III. THE INDESTRUCTIBILITY OF WORSHIP.

[16007] Men may assail it, may reason against it ; but sooner can the laws of the outward universe be repealed by human will, sooner can the sun be plucked from his sphere, than the idea of God can be erased from the human spirit, and His worship be banished from the earth. Worship has survived all revolutions. Corrupted, dishonoured, opposed, it yet lives. It is immortal as its Object—immortal as the soul from which it ascends.—*Dr. Channing.*

### IV. ITS BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE UPON MAN.

[16008] Why does the great Creator call upon His rational creatures to worship Him? Not because their devotions can heighten His glory or enhance His bliss. Were every sentiment of devotion quenched in the universe and every note of praise hushed for ever, His glory and happiness would remain undiminished. Why then? Not for His sake, but for theirs. It is only by worship that the profoundest cravings of their natures can be satisfied, only by worship that their powers can be fully and harmoniously developed. True worship is not a ritual, it is a life, it is not a service, it is a spirit, not a means to heaven, it is heaven itself. True worship is happiness. We only worship as we are happy.—*Dr. Thomas.*

### V. ITS SECRET SOURCE.

[16009] Just as spring is the outburst of summer, so worship is the outburst of Divine life in man.—*Davies.*

### VI. ITS MEDIUM.

[16010] As the altar sanctifies the gift, and as the fire upon the altar separated the airy and finer parts of the sacrifice from the terrene and earthly, so doth Christ spiritualize our services for God's acceptance. All that we have from God streams through His blood ; so all we give to God ascends by virtue of His merits. All our worship, therefore, must be bottomed on Christ. The creatures present their acknowledgments to God by man, and man can only

present his to God by Christ. It was utterly unlawful, after the building of the temple, to sacrifice anywhere else : the temple being a type of Christ, it is utterly unlawful for us to present our services in any other name than His.—*Charnock.*

### VII. ITS REQUISITE CHARACTERISTICS.

#### 1 Earnestness and fervour.

[16011] Before we ask what a man worships we have to ask whether he worships at all.—*Ruskin.*

[16012] If my soul is not engaged in worship it is even as though I worshipped not.—*Conjucius.*

[16013] He is a profane person that performs the duties of sacred worship slightly and superficially ; all our duties ought to be warmed with zeal, winged with affection, and shot up into heaven from the whole bent of the soul. Our whole hearts must go into them, and the strength and vigour of our spirits must diffuse themselves into every part of them. Truly all our Christian sacrifices, both of praise and prayer, must be offered up to God with fire ; and that fire which alone can sanctify them must be darted down from heaven—the celestial flame of zeal and love, which hath a natural tendency to ascend thither again, and to carry up our hearts and souls upon its wings with it.—*Bp. Hopkins.*

#### 2 Cheerfulness and reverence.

[16014] God requires a cheerfulness in His service, especially under the gospel, where He sits upon a throne of grace, discovers Himself in His amiableness, and acts the covenant of grace and the sweet relation of a Father. The priests of old were not to sully themselves with any sorrow when they were in the exercise of their functions.—*Charnock.*

[16015] God is clothed with unspeakable majesty : the glory of His face shines brighter than the lights of heaven in their splendour. Before Him the angels tremble, and the heavens melt. We ought not, therefore, to come before Him with "the sacrifice of fools," nor tender a duty to Him without falling low upon our faces, and bowing the knees of our hearts in token of reverence.—*Daille.*

### VIII. ITS SUPREME OBJECT.

[16016] God the Father hath appointed that adoration should be paid to His Son ; and the apostle, St. Paul, in conformity to that appointment, hath expressly told us that God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And in the Book of Revelation we may observe the angel restraining St. John, who

would have worshipped him, from doing it, saying, "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and one of thy brethren; adore the Lord Jesus." How uncommon a person must this Jesus be, and with what extraordinary patience endowed; who, though He be worshipped in heaven, is not yet avenged upon earth!—*Cyprian*.

#### IX. TESTS AS TO THE SINCERITY AND SPIRITUALITY OF OUR WORSHIP.

[16017] If we do not endeavour to imitate Him whom we worship, we do not worship Him in sincerity.—*Hannah More*.

[16018] Our worship is spiritual when the door of the heart is shut against all intruders, as our Saviour commands in closet-duties; it was not His meaning to command the shutting of the closet-door, and leave the heart-door open for every thought that would be apt to haunt us.—*Charnock*.

#### X. DISTINCTION BETWEEN ADORATION AND ADMIRATION.

[16019] Adoration is the mightiest love the soul can give—call it by what name you will. Many an Unitarian, as Channing, has adored, calling it only admiration, and many an orthodox Christian, calling Christ God with most accurate theology, has given Him only a cool intellectual homage.—*C. Kingsley*.

[16020] Adoration may be an intensified reverence, but it certainly is not intensified admiration. The difference between admiration and adoration is observable in the difference of their respective objects; and that difference is immeasurable; for, strictly speaking, we admire the finite but adore the Infinite.—*Canon Liddon*.

### PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.

#### I. DEFINITION AND NATURE OF PRAISE.

[16021] Praise is the expression of grateful love, enumerating the perfections of God, and recapitulating the blessings received from Him.—*Bp. Jackson*.

[16022] It is the overflowing expression of our affection—the language of the redeemed sinner. It is the child of love.—*H. More*.

[16023] Praise consists in the love of God, in wonder at the goodness of God, in recognition of the gifts of God, in seeing God in all things He gives us, ay, and even in the things that He refuses to us; so as to see our whole life in the light of God; and seeing this, to bless Him, adore Him, and glorify Him.—*Cardinal Manning*.

#### II. ITS QUALITIES.

[16024] True praise should be—(1) Hearty, with the whole heart (Psa. ix. 1, cxi. 1, cxxxviii. 1). (2) With the understanding (Psa. xlvii. 7; 1 Cor. xiv. 15). (3) With holy joy and gladness (Psa. lxxiii. 5, xcvi. 4; 2 Chron. xxix. 30). (4) With devout thankfulness (1 Chron. xvi. 4; Psa. cxlvii. 7). (5) With frequency (Psa. xxxv. 28, lxxi. 6; 2 Chron. xxx. 21). (6) Reverence (1 Chron. xxiii. 30; Neh. ix. 5).—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

#### III. ITS RANGE.

[16025] Praise takes in, in its wide range, enjoyment of present, remembrance of past, and anticipation of future, blessings. Prayer points the only way to heaven; praise is already there.—*H. More*.

#### IV. ITS EXCELLENCE.

##### 1. The fact viewed generally.

[16026] The praise of God is the choicest sacrifice and worship under a dispensation of redeeming grace: it is the prime and eternal part of worship under the gospel.—*Charnock*.

[16027] Alas for that capital crime of the Lord's people—barrenness in praises! Oh how fully I am persuaded that a line of praises is worth a leaf of prayer, and an hour of praises is worth a day of fasting and mourning!—*J. Livingstone*.

[16028] It is not poetry simply, it is the plain sober truth, that a whole assembly praising God is "like a little heaven below." A congregation of human hearts, agreeing together to sing forth their living human affections to the one object of their love, is always "the house of God and the gate of heaven." Such a congregation powerfully attracts heaven to itself, as like to like. With a diviner love, and greater unity in the Church, it might easily occur again that the joy would be too great, the glory too great, and the God of glory too fully present, for the ordinary service. Even as a flood carries away all signposts and barriers before it, and sweeps over all distinction of path and hedge, so would an unusual descent of the joy of God into His Church set at nought and suspend the mechanical order of the service, and bear away priest and people on the tide of one resistless impulse to praise and glorify God. Or the presence might be too overwhelming, utterance might be choked, and priest and people might have to wait in awe and silence for the passing over, or the withdrawal of the tide of glory. So it happened in the Hebrew temple. "It came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with their trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying—For He is good, for His mercy endureth for

ever; that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." Make the Church full of praise, and it will also be full of God. God and His praise cannot be apart. "O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel!"—*Dr. Pulsford.*

## 2 Explanations of the fact.

[16029] Praise is the noblest part of holy worship. The most ancient; it is more natural to imagine Adam in Paradise engaged in praises than in prayer. The most comprehensive; the work of holy angels as well as man; even nature is called upon to praise God. The most ennobling, looking more out of self, upwards to the great God. The most enduring; one chief element of the eternal bliss, when other duties (as repentance and prayer) have passed away.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[16030] (1) Praise implies gratitude. It expresses thankfulness for past and present mercies. (2) Praise implies self-forgetfulness. Self is in oblivion when we contemplate and are thankful for those blessings which have made self possible. (3) Praise implies an adoring and strong recognition of God's claims upon our practical service, who has showered those benefits which are the subject of our thanksgivings. (4) Praise is the result of the combined operation of all our faculties.—*Anon.*

[16031] Our highest praises to God cannot in the least benefit Him, but His goodness has put a value upon them, and His word commands them. Praise is therefore the debt and law of nature, as well as the privilege and pleasure of a Christian; it is an act in which the two ruling faculties of the mind, the understanding and the will, both concur: the understanding owns the propriety of it, and the will cheerfully pays it. Not only are we bound in gratitude to magnify the Lord for the continual favours He bestows on us, but such is the loveliness of His nature that it is hardly possible to think of Him properly without praising Him. It is the most disinterested as well as the most pleasing part of Divine worship, and has this distinguishing excellency, that it unites with all intelligent, holy beings, angels as well as men, and not only is well adapted for the Church militant, but will continue in the highest perfection in the Church triumphant.—*Francis Atterbury.*

[16032] It has the advantage—not possessed by preaching and praying—of using the sweet tones of melody and harmony to impress Divine sentiment on the heart.—*A. Barnes.*

## V. ITS BENEFITS AND VALUE.

[16033] It (1) honours God (Psa. xxii. 23, 1. 23). Praise is the revenue God derives from His creatures, and He will not remit it, because

man is fallen. (2) Brings a blessing to the Church, both personal and united. Excites a nobler spirit of communion with God; chases away trouble and sorrow; helps to check murmuring, and lifts the heart out of itself to heaven. (3) Impresses the world; presenting God's service as one of happiness and joy, with a smile to see and a song to hear. (4) Prepares for the service of heaven, the world of praise, adoration, and thanksgiving.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[16034] "The joy of the Lord is our strength;" it fortifies the soul, and infuses a vigour and courage unknown to others, which makes it victorious over all the power of the enemy; it is exceedingly perfective of our nature, begets high aims, generous sentiments and inclinations, and holy desires. Nothing can improve the mind of man like this sacred joy; like the contemplation of God, and delighting in Him; bringing it nearer to God, nearer to Him both in holiness and happiness.—*H. Grove.*

## VI. ITS RELATIONS.

### 1 To holy living.

[16035] Do not fancy, as too many do, that thou canst praise God by singing hymns to Him in church once a week, and disobeying Him all the week long. He asks of thee works as well as words; and more, He asks of thee works first and words after.—*Rev. Charles Kingsley.*

[16036] As physicians judge of the condition of men's hearts by the pulse which beats in their arms, and not by the words which proceed from their mouths, so we may judge the thankfulness of men by their lives rather than their professions.—*E. Foster.*

[16037] Would we acknowledge our obligations to the supreme Being in a pleasing and worthy manner, let us do it by a steady course of virtue and piety; for a holy and good life, animated by a sense of our obligations to the Divine goodness, is a kind of perpetual hymn of praise to God. Such a life is a proper expression of gratitude, as it is a continued act of obedience to the law of God, and reflects the image of His moral perfections, the brightest glory of the Deity.—*H. Grove.*

### 2 To prayer.

(1) *Praise is the best auxiliary to prayer.*

[16038] He who most bears in mind what has been done for him by God will be most emboldened to supplicate fresh gifts from above.—*Rev. H. Melvill, B.D.*

[16039] Praise makes our prayers bold and strong and sweet: feeds and enkindles them as with coals of fire.—*Luther.*

[16040] If there were more praise offered for prayers answered, there would be more prayers answered for which to offer praise.—*M. J.*



(2) *Praise is the fitting counterpart of prayer.*

*a. Viewed negatively.*

[16041] Prayer without praise is a constant craving for possession; but the absence of praise when we have that possession will soon make it take wings and fly. . . . To be always praying is to be a Christian when we are in need; but to be never praising is to be atheists when we have got what we asked for.—*Dr. John Cumming.*

*b. Viewed positively.*

[16042] A goodly heart is like those flowers which shut when the sun sets, and open again when the sun returns and shines upon them. If God withdraw His favour, and send the night of affliction, they shut themselves and their thoughts up in silence; but if the sun shine again, and shed abroad the light and sense of His love upon them, then their heart and mouth is wide open toward heaven in lifting up praises to Him. Hannah prayed silently so long as she was in bitterness of spirit; but as soon as God answered her prayer, and filled her heart with joy, presently her mouth was enlarged into a song of thanksgiving.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

## VII. ITS HELPS.

[16043] Universal charity and good-will among Christians would have a most happy influence upon them, to dispose them for praise and thanksgiving towards God; as we read of the first church at Jerusalem, that at the same time they continued with one accord in acts of worship and fellowship, they praised God; and could do it much better when they did it all together, with one mouth and one heart: whereas a narrow uncharitable spirit does naturally cramp and deaden the nobler exercises of Divine love, and holy praise, and thanksgiving.—*H. Grove.*

## VIII. ITS HINDRANCES.

[16044] Why have Christians often so little of "the spirit of praise"? Because of—(1) The natural ingratitude of the human heart, especially towards God. It seems less natural for men to acknowledge a benefit received from God, than one received from a fallen man. (2) Want of thought and consideration, not discerning the hand of God; looking to second causes, &c. (3) The deadening influence of the world, filling the mind full of other things.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[16045] It is impossible for selfish and proud dispositions to praise. Praising is contrary to the very nature and bent of such dispositions. Cautious and conscientious dispositions seldom praise. They lack the enthusiasm, they lack the *abandon* that belongs to praise. To those in whom the sense of suffering is greater than the sense of gratitude; to those who are more conscious of the weight that is pressing them down than of the Divine sustaining power, praise is almost impossible.—*Ward Beecher.*

## IX. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PRAISE AND BLESSING.

[16046] Praise relateth to God's excellency, and blessing to His benefits. *Psa. cxlv. 10:* "All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee." All the works of God declare His excellency; but the saints will ever be ascribing to God the benefits they have received from Him. So they are spoken of as things, though somewhat alike, yet as distinct. *Neh. ix. 5:* "Blessed be Thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise." Our praise cannot reach the excellency of His nature; nor our blessing express the worth of His benefits.—*T. Manton.*

## X. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.

[16047] Praise properly terminates in God, on account of His natural excellences and perfections, and is that act of devotion by which we confess and admire His several attributes; but thanksgiving is a more contracted duty, and imports only a grateful sense and acknowledgment of past mercies. We praise God for all His glorious acts of every kind, that regard either us or other men; for His very vengeance, and those judgments which He sometimes sends abroad in the earth; but we thank Him, properly speaking, for the instances of His goodness alone, and for such only of these as we ourselves are some way concerned in.—*Anon.*

## XI. THE DUTY OF PERPETUAL THANKSGIVING AND GRATITUDE TO GOD.

### I Difficulty of the duty.

[16048] To give thanks in *everything* implies something more than silent submission; it implies a constant and trustful acceptance of everything God arranges, and of every change He sends. For with the spirit of trust in the soul, its whole life would be a hymn of praise. Why, then, is it that we do not trust God with sufficient self-abandonment to thank Him in every lot of life? Manifestly, one source of the difficulty lies in those constant changes of the soul's life which are produced by temperament and circumstances. There are periods of life when it is comparatively easy to be thankful. There are days of sunshine when the pulse of health is strong and free, and bare existence is a joy, when all nature seems to sing one song, and the very "trees of the field clap their hands;" and *then* the soul chants gladly its hymn of thanksgiving to the Father. But there are other times, not joyous, but sad, in which we do not readily give thanks, and in which we are apt to grieve rather than to believe with all the simplicity of children that that which God has chosen for us is most wise, most just, and in the end most kind. Are we not almost afraid to believe broadly in the absolute goodness of our Father? Do we dare to stand up in the night of trouble

when we feel that we are lonely souls, with the great universe around us, and the untried eternity before—do we dare, then, to say, and to mean it, “This sorrow, which makes me feel my awful loneliness, is a blessing; in this life, which seems so stern, I am led every moment by the hand of a Father, and therefore all things are well”? No, no; it is but seldom that we reach that simplicity of trust in the absolute goodness of God; and therefore it is hard “in everything to give thanks.”—*E. L. Hull.*

## 2 Its motive.

[16049] “In everything give thanks,” says Paul, “for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” He seems to mean that God’s will is so revealed in Christ that, believing in it, we can give thanks in all things. Let us endeavour to trace the revelation given by the Saviour of His Father’s will; and then we shall see how it becomes a powerful motive to perpetual thanks. He revealed that will in three great facts. He showed that life was the perpetual providence of a Father; that *that* providence disciplined human character; and *that* discipline was explained by eternity alone.—*Ibid.*

## 3 Its practical value and importance.

[16050] Does gratitude for past mercies find its way into our prayers, abiding as a welcome, happy, sacred guest in our hearts? If not, the use of the old judgments, like bees perishing with their sting, has passed away with their inflection, and only left our hearts harder than before. The old mercies which, perhaps, softened us at the time, like water on cement, being forgotten and unimproved, have had that petrifying effect upon our emotions which sets into the prophet’s “stony heart.” A rule of grateful recollection, and rehearsal of God’s movements towards us, would have helped us to keep alive their sanctifying powers. There is no duty of personal piety more bounden, or more edifying, than these grateful reminiscences. They constitute the religion of the memory, from the neglect of which that noble faculty of the mind is excluded from its proper ministry. The terms “ungrateful and unholy” are bracketed together as cause and effect. Thanksgiving becomes *gratitude* only when it embraces the past in its fervent recognition of present blessings.—*Rev. J. E. Owen.*

## 4 Its attainment.

[16051] This state of perpetual thanksgiving is not to be reached by a single resolution, or attained in a day by an outburst of excited feeling. We may say to ourselves most sincerely, “Henceforth I resolve to trust God in everything,” and for the time we fancy that our strong feeling will never pass away. But little vexations soon shake our trust; greater troubles break down our resolution; the excited emotion on which we relied has declined, and we say in disappointment, “No man can be always thank-

ful.” You cannot attain it in that way. It is not the creature of a resolution, nor the result of a few days’ endeavour. *It is the gradual result of a life of earnest fellowship with God.*—Let not that familiar phrase disguise from you its meaning by its familiarity. We mean by it a life that in daily meditation realizes the presence of the Father—a life that by intense prayer feels the reality of a Father’s love—a life that comes at length to walk through the world with its toils and its temptations, under a deep sense of the all-surrounding, all-seeing God. Live that life, and gradually you will so realize the perpetual providence of God, that every year you will be more and more able to give thanks in everything.—*E. L. Hull.*

## XII. ITS ADVANTAGES.

[16052] A thankful heart to God for His blessings is the greatest blessing of all.—*R. Lucas.*

[16053] The Lord loves to bestow His mercy where He may have most praise; we delight to give to them that are thankful; musicians love to play where there is the best sound; God loves to bestow His mercies where He may hear of them again; the hungry soul sets the crown of praise upon the head of free grace. Psa. l. 23: “Whoso offereth praise, glorifies Me.”—*Anon.*

[16054] Unspeakable is the advantage that the soul raises to itself by the continual exercise of thanksgiving; for the grateful acknowledgment of favours is the way to more; even amongst men whose hands are short and strait, this is the means to pull on further beneficence: how much more from the God of all consolation, whose largest bounty diminisheth nothing of His store!—*J. Hall.*

## XIII. ITS GROUNDS AND EXTENT OF OBLIGATION.

[16055] Inasmuch as we are sinners, and have forfeited the blessings which we daily receive, what can be more suitable than that we should humbly thank that Almighty power from which comes such an inexhaustible supply of goodness to us so utterly undeserving?—*F. Wayland.*

[16056] For every beam of light that delights our eye, for every breath of air that cheers our spirits, for every drop of pleasant liquor that cools our thirst, for every minute of comfortable repose, for every step we safely take, for the happy issue of the least undertaking, for escaping the vengeance due to an idle word or a wanton thought, we owe a hymn of praise to God.—*Anon.*

[16057] When Paul says that in *all things* we may feel thankful, he meant “*all things*” to be read in its broad and obvious meaning. He

meant, therefore, that everything God sends us is to be accepted thankfully; that toil or rest—success or failure—the events that cheer, or those that overshadow us with gloom, are to be received not merely in submission, but with absolute thanks, as the best and wisest things that could occur. He meant *more*—that in the pain and depression of sickness—in the awful solitude of broken friendship and expiring hope—that even in those tremendous sorrows which shatter the heart, and leave us homeless and forlorn—a man may not only bow in reverence to the awful will of God, but may *thank* Him amid that sickness, that solitude, that unutterable woe. And looking thus at the injunction, we are driven to ask in amazement, How *can* that precept be obeyed? and then tempted to cry in despair, Such a life can never be attained! Now such a state of thankfulness *is* attainable, and, if we believed in “the will of God in Christ Jesus” as Paul believed in it, that state would at once be ours.—*Anon.*

#### XIV. THE CONSUMMATION OF PRAISE IN THE SONG OF THE REDEEMED.

[16058] To signify to us the absolute unity of Christ and His people, the Lord Jesus is said to praise God in the midst of the Church: “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee.” As there are many voices on earth, and all these voices are the same air compressed into sound;—as there are many eyes, and all these see with one light;—as there are many living forms of verdure, and all these forms are drawn forth from the same earth by the same sun; so there are many holy natures in heaven, but they are all the development of One Holy Nature; and there are many holy joys and songs, but they are all the joys and songs of that One Love which loveth all, and joyeth and singeth in all, and through all, and over all, world without end. The song of the redeemed, which is the song of songs, will be but the expression of the infinite joy of Christ over His Bride, the Church, chanted forth as the expression of their joy in their Redeemer.—*Dr. Pulsford.*

#### XV. THE EXTREME CULPABILITY OF ITS NEGLECT.

[16059] Though it be too common, after the manner of the ancient Israelites, to sing the praises of God, and then forget His works, yet we can never think such a temper and practice to be at all justifiable. When we are in trouble, we can seek God early and earnestly; and why then are we not as ready to glorify Him after He has delivered us? Why should the mercies of God be like fruitful showers on a barren rock, from which they slide off without making any impression? or like letters written on the water, which leave no mark of themselves behind?—*H. Grove.*

### GLORIFICATION AND EXALTATION.

#### I. THE DEMANDS OF GOD UPON THE ENTIRE MAN TO MANIFEST DIVINE GLORY AND EXALTEDNESS.

True religion claims as its sphere of operation and control the whole activity of man, in his inner and outer life.

[16060] True religion belongs to all the interests, engagements, and occupations of individual life; or, to put it perhaps in a correcter form, they all belong to it. It is not something occasional or local, or in any way partial. False religions are. They are confined to time, place, circumstance; and are so partial, that they do not call for the submission of the whole man: they are satisfied with his homage in part. They may be compared in their influence on man to what is called chemical attraction; where one particular body has an affinity for another particular body, and only for that; whilst true religion is like the attraction of gravitation, which draws all bodies on the earth to its centre, and that earth itself to a deeper centre in our solar system; and that system itself perhaps to a deeper centre still; and so on, never stopping till it causes all to circle, in harmonious movement, around the very throne of God, which is the centre, yea, and origin, and basis, and glory of the whole. The sphere of the operation of true religion is not a man's actions merely, nor his opinions, nor feelings, nor his purposes, nor his public, nor social, nor individual life; but all these together. It is very exacting. It cannot be otherwise, without treason toward Heaven. The whole man is God's creature. The whole man is the object of God's care. The whole man was purchased by the blood of Christ: should less than the whole man be sanctified? Can man dutifully tender service which embraces less than the whole man—all his powers, throughout all his life? Duty, and reason, and gratitude would pronounce the keeping back the smallest portion of the price, as a “robbing of God.”—*William Sparrow, D.D.*

#### II. NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DOCTRINE CONVEYED IN THE DEMAND.

[16061] This doctrine is the Christian *ideal*—the Scriptural *model*—the abstract statement of what *ought to be*; just as the Saviour's earthly life was the actual realization of the beautiful, the glorious conception. From this it follows, of course, that this ideal can never be reached in this world by mere mortal man; such perfection is not permitted him here below; but still, that he may and should be ever approximating nearer and nearer to it. The second thought is, that, when it is commanded us to do all to the glory of God, even the commonest duties of life, it is not expected that, in every instance, there be an explicit intention and pur-



pose in the mind to that effect: *that* is not possible with our limited power of thought and mental energy. It is required that there be a *habitual* reference to God, and a *habitual* sense of His presence, and a *habitual* design to serve Him, and a *habitual* desire for His glory in the heart of the Christian; a habitual desire which will show itself continually in the intervals of earthly occupation, in holy meditations, solemn vows, devout prayers, earnest praises, and fixed resolves; whilst at all other times it will be a silent but real motion and tendency of the inner spirit, in perfect accord with these more explicit but occasional exercises of the mind. If the one is as the tossing of the ocean waves, when the winds are blowing, the other is that motion of the waters which continues even after the winds are hushed, and which, however slight it may become, still never ceases.—*Ibid.*

### III. THE REQUIRED REFERENCE TO GOD'S GLORY AS A REGULATING PRINCIPLE IN EVERY DETAIL OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Some of the ways in which this glory is to be referred to by man (1 Cor. x. 31).

(1) *Respect must be had to the glory of God in the use of His varied gifts to man.*

[16062] A principle which covers all life may of course be exemplified in any part of it, the more or the less important points alike. St. Paul says, "Whether ye eat or drink." . . . He would have the principle of a reference to God's glory regulate and control us even in the use of our food. The reception of food, as being necessary to life, is one of the commonest acts of life; and it occurs under an endless variety of circumstances. Yet even here it seems, according to the principles of Christ's religion, God must not be overlooked or forgotten. The apostle would have us, in such case, recognize God as the Giver of every good and perfect gift; as the bountiful Benefactor, who openeth His hand and filleth all things living with plenteousness. He would not have *man* eat as the dumb *beast* eats. He would not have the *Christian* eat as even many *men* eat. He would have no such brutish oblivion of Him, by whom our board is spread, nor of our dependence upon Him for life and breath, and bread, and all things. And in this case Paul might say, as he has said on another occasion, Here I give "*command, yet not I (i.e., alone), but the Lord (also).*" What a beautiful lesson our Lord hath left us on this subject! About to feed the people miraculously, He called the people to thanksgiving, and in it led the way. And as in the *act*, so in the *manner and spirit* of it, is He our example and our obligation. It was with Him no idle ceremony, thoughtlessly, much less irreverently, performed or participated in. It was a serious and solemn act, meant to honour God *at the moment*; and also to honour Him yet further as an influence, by exercising a restraint upon the recipients of His bounty in the indulgence of their appetites.—*Ibid.*

[16063] How inconsistent excess in eating and drinking, and a form of thanksgiving at meat! It looks profane, as though we would make God the "minister of sin." After thanking God for the use of His gifts, it is a crying offence to turn round and abuse them, whether by wasting them (while so many are in want) or by sensualizing ourselves, when we should only be renewing our strength for God's service. How degrading thus to live to eat, and not rather simply eat to live—to live to God's glory. Some religious bodies that live in communities, sensible of this danger, and to guard against it, are wont to eat in silence. Their design and expectation is, to be more self-collected and self-restrained. Now while we reject the expedient, let us take the hint. To understand and appreciate the hint, we have need only to inquire how we should have felt and acted in this matter if it had been our lot to mingle with the disciples, with whom Jesus was wont constantly to "sit at meat." Is it not possible that some of us would, under such circumstances, in eating and drinking, seek, more than we do, the glory of God?—*Ibid.*

[16064] The taking of food, if sanctified by religion, is *eucharistic*, involves devotion in act and habit, in one of its highest forms. And what Christian heart, humbled by sin and yet cheered and comforted by the Saviour, when he remembers on the one hand how many thousands in almost every land lack what is needful for the full support of life; and on the other, that *he*, though, most probably, he has never known want, has not been worthy, by reason of his sin and unfaithfulness, of the crumbs that fall from the table of the Divine bounty, can fail to eat his daily food with daily gratitude to God? Yea, suppose he has even felt the pinchings of poverty—has sometimes lacked bread—necessary bread, and never at any time abounded; what then, are thanks thereby precluded? . . . A heart full of Christian love and hope cannot be restrained by any outward circumstances; but whether it abounds or suffers need, whether it eats and drinks plentifully or scantily, believing all to be ordered by a merciful and wise Providence, will give thanks to God, and so do all to the glory of God.—*Ibid.*

(2) *In the use of speech.*

a. It should be guarded.

[16065] How volatile are words, how easily multiplied, how unconsciously uttered, and yet how potent their energy! They are the vehicle of nearly all the moral power in our world. God makes use of them with His creature man, and man with his fellow man. Speech and reason are essentially inseparable. The former grows out of the latter, and the latter is matured and perfected in and by the former. To indicate the closeness of the relation, in some languages, the same word is made to stand for both. Whatever, therefore, belongs to reason as an agency or instrumentality, belongs to speech or language. And not only is it powerful in operating upon others, but also upon him who uses it.

It is not others only that we please, or instruct, or distress, or mislead : we act upon ourselves also, it may be for good, it may be for evil. And not only do our words affect our internal character, and indicate it also ; but they have also a most solemn bearing upon our relation to God and our standing in His sight. The two views of the momentous nature of speech, and its moral import, are united in the Saviour's rebuke of the Pharisees, who seemed not to be sensible how polluting and condemnatory mere words might be : "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." This close identification of a man's character and condition, with the use which he makes of speech, which our Saviour thus solemnly announces, is also affirmed by St. James. Having said that "in many things we offend all," he adds, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." Now, if all this can be said of the gift of speech as an index and an agency, then surely, when the apostle said, "Whether ye eat or drink, or *whatsoever ye do*," he could not mean to omit so important a function of life as this : he must have regarded speech as something in the use of which we may largely honour or dishonour God.—*Ibid.*

#### b. It should be truthful.

[16066] God is a God of truth. He is the true God. He speaks only truth, and He requires truth. He requires it, too, in the greater and lesser affairs of life ; and it behoves us to take heed to the requirement, in the latter case especially. In certain communities, and among certain classes, perhaps it might be otherwise ; but among those who cultivate at least the moralities of life, and have their consciences quickened by religious knowledge, and are, moreover, hedged in by influences which forbid any flagrant transgressions of the law of veracity, the attention should be directed and care exercised in little matters. If we would *glorify* God in all things, we must be *truthful* in all things.

#### c. It should be temperate and sedate.

[16067] We need run into no cynical or ascetic extremes. We are not called upon to ignore the diversities of age, or the varieties of temperament, or the multiplicity of positions in the world, and the proprieties of each. We should remember and allow for them all. It is in accordance with the spirit of Christianity to do so. But still it should be remembered, that the spirit of Christianity is not a spirit of frivolity or habitual levity. Christians owe it to the *Honour* of Him they profess to serve, to bear constantly in mind, amid the relaxations and hilarities of life, that it is still a very solemn thing to live, and no less solemn, surely, to die ; and that in the midst of life we are in death.

#### d. It should be reverent.

[16068] In intercourse with those in whom the fear of God does not reign, in hearing their brilliant conversation, or eloquent speaking, or in reading their elaborate and elegant compositions, in which things sacred are too often used to give point to things secular, and, it may be, profane ; if the Christian is off his guard, he may be drawn in to sanction what his profession would condemn ; and sometimes, perhaps, in his own efforts in some of the ways just mentioned, he may become positively faulty, by following their evil example. Thus too often is Christ wounded in the house of His friends ; and the souls of men are wounded also. If Christians should be careful and sedate in *all* their language ; when that language touches things sacred and Divine, they should be careful to let all men see that they have not forgotten themselves, that they know where they are, that they are aware they have come on "holy ground."

#### e. It should be benevolent.

[16069] So far as the law of love reigns within the Christian's speech *will* be benevolent. To be convinced of this, we need only take St. Paul's description of Christian love in its abstract perfection, as he has given it in 1 Cor. xiii. . . . I am sensible that our speech may be more of manner than of spirit, the result of external training and refinement, rather than the outgrowth of religion : and consequently, that with a very specious appearance, it may be very hollow and worthless ; but it belongs to the Christian to put substance and value into it. If the world produces the counterfeit, let him produce the coin. It belongs to the world to *appear*, it belongs to the Christian, in the strength and spirit and example of his Master, to *appear* and to *be*, in his words, as well as feelings and acts, imitating Christ, to the *glory of God the Father*.

#### f. It should be devout.

[16070] The gift of speech should be exercised in devotion, in speaking God's praises, in adoring His majesty, in offering Him prayer. How mean and unworthy the office and function of speech, if by it we should hold intercourse with men and other created things only ! Let it expatiate in the widest fields of science, or search among the roots of all being and knowledge in the deepest philosophy ; still how unworthy its use if it do not at times overleap these bounds, and hold converse with the infinite God ! Till then it is rather abused than used ; perverted than rightly applied.—*Ibid.*

[16071] The man that never prays is one who has not yet found the special and proper employment for the noblest and most distinctive gift of his nature. He is as a Mozart that never played, a Raphael that never painted, a Michael Angelo that never designed a temple. He is a vessel of honour put to dishonour. He is a creature utterly perverted from the very idea and purpose of his being. That the gift of speech should be exercised in prayer, in the

temple of God, at the family altar, in his chamber with the door shut—this is looked for of course in every Christian.—*Ibid.*

[16072] What I desire to suggest is, that the consistent Christian will be devout in the style and tone of his language always and everywhere. As he not only believes in God, but walks with God, there will be an atmosphere of devotion about him and a spirit of devotion within him, which will give a devout shaping to his thoughts, and therefore to his expressions. He will not plan and execute, he will not desire and strive, in the absolute and unconditional way of the world; thinking of no controlling power above, nor of any obstacles in his way, but those which man or passive nature's laws may put there. He will conceive every wish, with a reservation; form every purpose with a condition, which, if expedient, will be expressed, but certainly will be in his heart. Remembering that man proposes, but God disposes—that “the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise nor riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill, but that time and chance happeneth to them all;” he will be habitually looking beyond and above second causes; and in his heart stay himself and all his plans and doings upon God, in humble submission to His will, whether that will be ratification or reversal. And having such thoughts and feelings in his heart, why should he not give them vent in words, where it would not be a needless singularity, or, worse still, a casting of pearls before swine? I conclude this topic of devoutness of speech as a means of glorifying God, by the strong and solemn judgment of St. James. “Go to now,” says he, “ye that say to-day or to-morrow we shall go into such a city and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that.”—*Ibid.*

(3) *In the use of time.*

[16073] Time—what is it? As a metaphysical question this is a most knotty and abstruse one, and as such I would not wish to be called to answer it; but as a practical one it is plain and simple, and as solemn as it is plain. Time is a condition of human activity; it is the birth-place of souls; it is the arena of life; it is the battle-field of moral being; it is the theatre of Divine display; it is the measure of earthly existence; it is the vestibule of immortality. Inseparable from our being, it is, like that being, the gift of God. And as God made us for His glory, He gave it to us, also, for His glory. As a part of that glory, He gave it to us for our happiness, but not for our whim. He gave it to us under the condition which adheres to all His gifts—that we should use it according to His will, and in subserviency to His honour. We often say, “Our time’s our own:” it may be

said in reference to our fellow man; but it cannot with truth be said in reference to God. Our days are those of a hireling—a hireling whom God hath made for Himself. They are given us as work-time, by Him who has sent us into His vineyard. And as the sphere of our activity, all that we do (and what we do we are), being summed up in it, be it much, or be it little, how invaluable is it! What words can express its worth! But it has an additional value from its uncertain continuance. It is no idle truism, “we know not what shall be on the morrow.” All the medical science in the world cannot assure us that we shall see another sun either set or rise. And whilst the great God thus enhances time to us, and seeks to keep us dependent on Him for all things, by its uncertainty; so also does He by its brevity. Though we know not exactly where, He has set bounds to it, and these bounds are very narrow, very near; we soon shall reach them. Time is valuable then on the same principle also, as are the precious metals. Every moment is as a grain of golden sand. This precious gift, every way so precious; how should it be used, except to the glory of the infinite Giver? This is its only worthy application, and to us the only safe one.—*Ibid.*

[16074] Time has but two proper uses, and all others are utterly subordinate to them, and insignificant in comparison of them. The first is, to be spiritually wise in, to make our peace with God in; and then, having obtained reconciliation with God through the blood of His Son, to serve Him in it, by the aid of His Spirit, to our lives’ end. Time is but the shadow of eternity, and coming events cast their shadows before. If we are not reconciled to God, not serving Him, it is to us a portentous shadow, heralding the approach of “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power.” But if we are God’s, and God is ours in Christ, then the use of time is, that we glorify Him therein; that we live for Him, and regulate our hearts and lives to please Him; that we be not wasteful of it, but frugal; that we husband it with care and improve it as a talent; that we feel we are stewards and not proprietors in reference to it; that we value it as opportunity of self-education, of benefitting others, of honouring Christ, of advancing His kingdom, and, so specially, of *glorifying God*.—*Ibid.*

N.B.—A busy age is making steady and serious encroachments upon the time at our disposal for calm and quiet contemplation and for special acts of Christian self-culture. And while it is doubtless a consoling thought to know that we can convert the daily round of appointed tasks into religious service by the right spirit in which they are fulfilled; still, this right spirit can alone be sustained by set times for secret devotion and by definite acts of glorifying God in the innermost shrines of our consecrated souls.—C. N.



## WARFARE.

## I. THE TWOFOLD CHARACTER OF CHRISTIAN WARFARE.

Christian warfare is both internal and external—each alike necessary to and dependent on the other.

[16075] In our personal experience, in our inner life, the forces of evil have to be overcome, while in our relation with others we are called upon to carry on an aggressive war against the spirit and power of the prince of this world. So closely are these two branches of the spiritual conflict connected with each other, that the neglect of either is the failure of both. In vain shall we attempt to attain to personal holiness while we are careless of the spiritual welfare of others, and lose sight of our social responsibilities; and in vain shall we attempt to do the work which God has given us in the world, unless in the spirit of personal obedience to the Divine Will, and by the exercise of steadfast faith in the power that worketh in us, we are ourselves growing in personal holiness, waxing strong in the Lord, and overcoming the wicked one. He who preaches the gospel without living the gospel will ere long be conscious of spiritual leanness. He who attempts to live the gospel without witnessing to the gospel will find himself continually disappointed in his attempts to attain to personal holiness. The inconsistency of his outward life will react upon his inward experience, his conscience will be burdened with blood-guiltiness, his communion with God will be broken, and a certain sense of insincerity and hypocrisy in his professions will paralyse his higher aspirations.—*Rev. W. Hay Aiken.*

## II. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUAL COMBATANTS.

[16076] We are each of us contributing in our measure to the issues of the grand and universal conflict between the forces of good and evil. We are too apt to lose sight of the solemn responsibility that rests upon us in this respect; and just in so far as we forget this our lives will become frivolous and inane. It is the consciousness of this that will give to our lives both dignity of character and loftiness of purpose. To ignore this is to sink to a life of trifling. This conflict is not being carried on directly between God and Satan, but indirectly through the intervention of human agency. The exercise of Supreme Omnipotence might in a moment crush all opposition, but for purposes of wisdom which we may not be able fully to explain, and yet can believe to be explicable, this omnipotent power is not exhibited, and we are called, each of us, to contribute our little towards that grand end which will sooner or later be attained—the subjugation of all opposing forces to the perfect will of God.—*Anon.*

## III. SPIRITUAL ARMS FOR THE DAY OF BATTLE.

## 1. Faith.

[16077] Faith enableth to overcome the world. The world, indeed, hath conquered millions; the greatest soldiers have been slain by it. Alexander could subdue the nations in it, but could not subdue his affections to it. As great a conqueror as he was over it, he was its slave and vassal; for his ambition was still larger than his dominions. But faith, clothing the Christian with the sun, helps him to trample this moon under his feet: "This is your victory over the world, even your faith" (1 John v. 4).—*G. Swinnoek, M.A.*

[16078] What a blessed reality is this—that we, sinful and finite creatures, can be united to the Infinite One! What a truth is this—that the human soul can be attached to God, can enter into God, and live in Him! It is through faith we are attached. It is through faith that we dwell in God and God in us. But to be united to God is to lay hold of the Omnipotent. It is to repose upon the central heart of the universe, and have the Father of all spirits overshadowing us as our Protector. Therefore, we are exhorted to fight the good fight of *faith*, and lay hold on eternal life. Faith is a great power in the overcoming of our enemies. If fear weakens, faith strengthens. A growing faith is continually diminishing the catalogue of impossibilities, and all God's heroes have been men of strong conviction. It was by faith that the walls of Jericho fell down. Through faith God's people have "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Even in our own day things as great may be done by means of faith. When the enemies of the cross see that we are animated by a resolute conviction, that of itself is fitted greatly to shake them. Therefore, we say, one of the elements of the Christian's power for the pulling down of the kingdom of falsehood is the power of faith.—*F. Ferguson.*

## 2. Prayer.

[16079] Great battles have been fought in this world by men on their knees. Prayer is the imbibing of strength. In prayer we drink in power from God. Those who do not pray are weak, and unfit for the battle of life. For what is prayer? It is a wrestling with God; yea, a wrestling that may prevail. Now, when a man has wrestled with God, he is strong enough to wrestle with any enemy. What imp of darkness will face a Christian when he comes forth from communion with God? When Jacob had wrestled with God, he was quite prepared to meet his brother Esau. The weaker had now become the stronger. When the strong

natural man met the man of prayer, he was vanquished; he fell upon his neck and wept. We are commanded to pray for our enemies, because that is the best way to overcome them. It both subdues and saves them. We not only lose an enemy; we gain a friend. The greatest strongholds of sin may be levelled by prayer. Prayer is a scaling ladder, and if it can mount to the throne of God, it can scale the highest walls of opposition on earth. Prayer is a battering ram, and if it can besiege the gates of heaven, and effect an entrance there, it can overthrow the strongest fortifications of the wicked. When the hands of Moses were held up in prayer, the people of God prevailed in the battle. While we work and fight, let us also pray.—*Ibid.*

### 3 Truth.

[16080] Truth is a mighty weapon. It is the sword of the Spirit—the Word of God. There is nothing so powerful as truth. It is “the next grandest thing to God;” yea, it is God Himself. Man makes truth his own by thought, and even in the department of secular affairs thought is the first power. The pen is a greater power than the sword. It is the glory of a man that he can think. All despots, or those who have made themselves great by the use of carnal weapons, have been afraid of thoughtful men. Cæsar was afraid of them; and so was Napoleon. Thoughtful men commune in secret with truth, and that is the conspiracy which tyrants have most to fear. Satan, who is the arch-despot, tries to keep people from thinking, that he may keep them from truth. He supplies them with other subjects, that he may keep them from the Bible; for he knows that that word is the sword which can give him a fatal wound. Now, the Christian warrior is in possession of the truth of God. This was the weapon with which Jesus repulsed Satan in His temptation; and if we use it aright we shall find it mighty through God.—*Ibid.*

### 4 Holiness.

[16081] A calm and consistent Christian career will disarm many enemies. Its quiet daily influence will increase in strength, gradually silence objectors, and win a way into their hearts. The strongholds of prejudice will give way. A holy and consistent life will gather into itself and represent the other powers of faith, prayer, and truth.—*Ibid.*

## IV. SUBORDINATE WEAPONS OF LIMITED VALUE.

### 1 Human political combination and organization.

[16082] This is an age of great associations; and it is an inevitable tendency of society that men should unite and co-operate. But along with this tendency there is very apt to grow up a false confidence in mere human organization and political power. Men say there is great

power in numbers—in majorities; but numbers and majorities are nothing with God. God Himself stood alone in His own world, and He was not weakened by the defection of men; and the Church has never been happier or stronger than when she trusted in Him alone as her helper. The power of combination is not to be despised. *Properly used* it is a legitimate agency, but in itself it is weak. The world, however, has great faith in it; for “the kings of the earth set themselves together, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.”—*Ibid.*

### 2 Money.

[16083] By means of money great numbers of men can be enlisted in the cause of truth. It can build colleges and churches. It can gather together great stores of ammunition for the warfare, but it cannot communicate the living spark, the heavenly current, without which all this material is dead and vain.—*Ibid.*

### 3 Art and science.

[16084] Art and science can do much for the improvement of man as subordinate agencies. They can make the world a more comfortable place of habitation for him. They can lighten his labours, and gratify his taste; extend his knowledge of nature, and his dominion over it. Man can even carry them into his worship, and, with the help of painting, statuary, and music, construct a gorgeous ceremonial. But in the end these also are as weak as other instrumentalities. Nations the most advanced in the civilizing influence of art have yet been frightfully depraved. Materially they were glorious, but morally they grovelled in the dust. They shone resplendently in the eyes of men, but were an abomination in the sight of God. When art takes the place of religion, the people receive stones for bread—the worship of God becomes a mere mechanical performance, and the finest temple is but a splendid sepulchre of souls.—*Ibid.*

### 4 Philosophy and eloquence.

[16085] It is desirable that the ministers of truth should be thoughtful, learned, and eloquent. They should be able to meet accomplished sceptics on their own ground. It is of great advantage to the cause of truth when it has on its side sanctified thinkers and great scholars—when the greatest historian of a nation, the greatest poet, and the greatest orator avow themselves to be Christians; but the success of our Christian warfare does not necessarily depend on such as these. It sometimes happens that the greatest writers and speakers are not on the side of Christianity, and it is also frequently the case that God employs the most plainly endowed men to accom-

plish His purposes ; but they are always endowed in the highest sense, being full of grace and spiritual power. Learning is not indispensable, and eloquence is not indispensable ; but the Spirit of the Lord is, and we have much need to have more of that, and to believe in it more.—*Ibid.*

#### V. DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE CHRISTIAN'S MILITANT LIFE:

[16086] In all other warfare but that of the Christian with his own flesh, the assailant and the defender are different persons, but in this warfare assailant and defender are both one. I am the adversary of my own flesh. I am the defender of my own soul. My inner man fights against my outward man, and my exterior man against my interior man. Again, when two fight in all other warfare, they do not fight always, do not always attack, and always defend, but my flesh and my spirit are always in battle array, always armed the one against the other, always attacking, always defending, and death only will put an end to the battle and decide the victory of either the flesh over the spirit, or the spirit over the flesh.—*St. Chrysostom.*

#### VI. DUTY OF CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH, AND THE REQUISITE SPIRIT FOR SUCH STRIFE.

[16087] When in one place Christians are exhorted "to contend earnestly for the faith ;" and in another we are told, "the servant of the Lord must not strive ;" it is plain there is a contention for religion which is a duty, and there is a contention even concerning religion too, which is a sin. And that sin the apostle in this context, out of which our discourse arises, doth deservedly expose by the name of "flesh," and of the "lust," or of the works thereof, such as "wrath," "variance," "envy," "hatred," &c. : whence it is easy to collect in what sense it is said in the mentioned place, the servant of the Lord must not strive ; namely, as that striving excludes the "gentleness," the "aptness to instruct," and the "patience," which are in the same place enjoined, where that striving is forbidden. And from thence it is equally easy to collect, too, in what sense we ought to contend for the faith earnestly ; that is, with all that earnestness which will consist with these, not with such as excludes them ; as earnestly as you will, but with a sedate mind, full of charity, candour, kindness, and benignity towards them we strive with.—*J. Howe.*

[16088] Where shall love and sympathy and beneficence find ampler training ? or patience, courage, dauntless devotion, nobler opportunities of exercise—than in the war with evil ? Where shall faith find richer culture, or hope a more entrancing aim, than in that victory over sin and sorrow and death which, if Chris-

tianity be true, is one day to crown the strife of ages ? Live for this, find your dearest work here, let love to God and man be the animating principle of your being, and then, let death come when it may, and carry you where it will, you will not be unprepared for it. The rending of the veil which hides the secrets of the unseen world, the summons that calls you into regions unknown, need awaken in your breast no perturbation or dismay, for you cannot in God's universe go where love and truth and self-devotion are things of nought, or where a soul filled with undying faith in the progress, and identifying its own happiness with the final triumph of goodness, shall find itself forsaken.—*Caird.*

#### VII. STRONGHOLDS OF SIN RETARDING THE PROGRESS OF TRUTH.

False systems, customs, and habits.

[16089] Beginning at the outermost wall, there is the stronghold of false systems, political and religious. How tenaciously do false ideas of social rights maintain their hold, class tyrannizing over class ! Think of slavery, that dark stronghold of sin, being permitted to stand till the middle of the nineteenth century. Among religious systems there are superstition and spurious rationalism, both founding themselves in depraved human nature. Around the whole field of vision loom the great towers of heathendom, still undemolished. Such are some of the strongholds of false systems, political and religious. Then there are the strongholds of false customs and habits—customs being the habits of society, as habits are the customs of the individual. In luxury and licentiousness, in drunkenness and in many forms of amusement, there are so many strongholds of sin. Satan is ever busy deluding souls into the belief that they are safe, and then allowing them to live as they please. What a stronghold of sin there is in the widespread indifference of the present time, and in the open defiance and contempt of religious obligations ! In the midst of this Christian country what multitudes are still rooted and grounded in practical atheism, sneering at everything higher, and living simply as the creatures of the dust ! They are incased in their unbelief as in a coat of mail—built up in it as in a strong tower. Verily sin has taken a strong hold of the world, when, after eighteen centuries of gospel light, and all the artillery of truth which the Church has brought to bear against them, the lofty towers of superstition and tyranny, infidelity and licentiousness, should still be standing. These are the strongholds the Christian army has to storm and take. This is our warfare. There can be no discussion among Christians as to the duty of bringing down these strongholds.—*F. Ferguson.*

[16090] A great number of men seem to be indifferent to the issue of the struggle against false systems and customs, and even uncon-



scious of its existence; or, if they hear of it, regard it as some visionary battle in the clouds. And yet they are not really indifferent; for every man will be found at last on the one side or the other, and the day seems to be fast approaching, even in this world, when seeming indifference must be cast aside, and some fiery trial, as God's bright ploughshare, shall drive through the mingled mass of believers and unbelievers.—*Ibid.*

## VIII. ENCOURAGEMENTS TO THE CONFLICT.

### 1 The realization of Divine power fighting at our side.

[16091] Sin is a disintegrating force; sin is a powerful solvent. Sin separates; virtue unites. Satan leads you to a yawning chasm of discouragement; God leads you to a peak of encouragement, whence you may plainly catch a glimpse of the towering summit of complete achievement. He has entered the arena of battle. By creation He willed that the possibility of defeat was, after all, not a counterpoise to the prospect of victory sufficient to forbid the existence of the world. That is a mystery that you and I cannot altogether fathom. Around the work of our Creator there are robes of darkness, but we know at least this, that God, who knoweth all, saw that it was better that man should have the possibility of moral ruin than that he should not have the possibility of spiritual success. Thereby, in creation, God entered the arena of battle. God is with us as we fight. He entered it more distinctly in incarnation. When our Blessed Redeemer took our flesh, He did it to wage the war, not as God simply, but as man, equipped with our nature, fully furnished with our passions, our desires, our hopes, our fears; with the purest of life's joys that belong to us, and I need hardly say the prospect of the darkest sorrows. That great Conqueror lived and struggled under the conditions of our humanity, and when we fight our battle we are fighting with Jesus at our side. Again, I remind you of a further point in the encouragement that God gives. He entered the arena of battle in the Passion. The great tragedy in the hall of Pilate and the palace of Herod, the great tragedy in the streets of Jerusalem and on the hill of Calvary, was not only a tragedy—it was a battle. It was the battle at its height; it was the fight of the Captain who led the forlorn hope. Forlorn hope! It may appear so to men. You and I have the great encouragement that when we turn to look at our Master as our Captain, when we enter the arena of contest, God in creation, God in incarnation, God above all in the passion of His sorrow, is fighting side by side with us all. That is the encouragement.—*Canon Knox-Little.*

[16092] The true Christian in the capacity of a warrior is engaged in a conflict of no ordinary difficulty and severity. Our own strength is perfect weakness. There is no might by which

we can overcome in the spiritual warfare but the might of Jehovah, and therefore we are bidden to be strong in the Lord—in other words, to recognize that the source of all strength for the conflict to which we are summoned is the Lord Jehovah. In Him is everlasting strength. He is the Lord omnipotent, and His almighty power is engaged in behalf of all who put their trust in Him. What a ground of comfort and encouragement it might prove to every sincere Christian to realize the omnipotent power of Christ, the fulness of His might as sure to be exercised in behalf of each soul that trusts in Him.—*R. Bickersteth, D.D.*

[16093] Be our spiritual enemies ever so numerous or formidable, in Christ there is strength which they cannot withstand. Be they ever so subtle or malignant, the victory is ours provided only we will be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.—*Ibid.*

### 2 The sense of unity subsisting between us and our brethren-in-arms.

[16094] When we come to look at the Christian battle, the encouragement is not merely—although that, we know, is supreme—that God has entered the arena as our companion, but that we are also supporting one another, that we Christians are fighting side by side; that one great power of the soldier is the encouragement of a brotherhood created by Christ, and that He has taught us in our battle to call one another brothers-in-arms. I remember an anecdote told by an officer of the English army of an occurrence the night before the storming of the Redan, which showed how great an encouragement that sense of brotherhood, so strong amongst soldiers, had been to the heart of one whose courage was flagging in prospect of the next day's terrible slaughter, and how it had helped to bear an inexperienced boy through the trying hours of waiting and anticipation, so terrible to the bravest of men on the eve of a battle. Revelation and experience witness to us all that in the struggle against the powers of darkness and the forces of sin that strength is not wanting to the Christian soldier.—*Canon Knox-Little.*

### 3 The knowledge of our great Captain's love.

[16095] The battle of the soldier of Christ is in love. Love strengthens faith. Love is the nerve of life. To love one another and to love God is the earnest of victory. When the world is against you, when the flesh, in its awful power, is upon you, when Satan is whispering his subtle allurements, look to the great Captain, look to the incarnate Redeemer; look to Him and see in His face what is written: "Behold the glorious story, My child—I love you;" and the love that is poured from the heart of Jesus through the heart of His creatures is that final encouragement of the soldier in His battle, whereby we are enabled to go forth in the Chris-

hian life as a life of struggle, and to "endure hardness" as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.—*Ibid.*

## WATCHFULNESS.

### I. IMPORT AND PURPOSE OF WATCHFULNESS.

[16096] Watching imports a strong, lively, abiding sense and persuasion of the exceeding greatness of the evil which we watch and contend against. Sense of danger is the first step to safety, and no man watches but to secure and defend himself. Watching is a troublesome and severe work, and wise men would not willingly trouble themselves to no purpose. A combatant must first know and dread the mischief of a blow, before he will fence against it: he must see it coming with his eye, before he will ward it off with his hand.—*R. South, D.D.*

### II. ITS REQUISITE CONNECTION WITH PRAYER.

[16097] He that prays, and does not follow it with watching, is like him that sows his field with precious seed, but leaves the gate open for swine to come and rout it up.—*Gurnall.*

[16098] Watchfulness without prayer is presumption, and prayer without watchfulness is a mockery; by the first a man invades God's part in this great work, and by the latter he neglects his own. Prayer not assisted by practice is laziness, and contradicted by practice is hypocrisy; it is indeed of mighty force and use within its proper compass, but it was never designed to supply the room of watchfulness, or to make wish serve instead of endeavour.—*South.*

[16099] God generally gives spiritual blessings and deliverance as He does temporal, that is, by the mediation of an active and vigorous industry. The fruits of the earth are the gift of God, and we pray for them as such; but yet we plant, and we sow, and we plough for all that; and the hands which are sometimes lifted up in prayer must at other times be put to the plough, or the husbandman must expect no crop. Everything must be effected in the way proper to its nature, with the concurrent influence of the Divine grace, not to supersede the means, but to prosper and make them effectual. And upon this account men deceive themselves most grossly and wretchedly when they expect that from prayer which God never intended for it.—*Ibid.*

[16100] He who hopes to be delivered from temptation merely by praying against it, affronts God, and deludes himself, and might to as much

purpose fall asleep in the midst of his prayers as do nothing but sleep after them. Some ruin their souls by neglect of prayer, and some perhaps do them as much mischief by adoring it, while by placing their whole entire confidence in it, they commit an old piece of idolatry and make a god of their very devotions. I have heard of one, and him none of the strictest livers, who yet would be sure to say his prayers every morning, and when he had done bid the devil do his worst, thus using prayer as a kind of spell or charm; but the old serpent was not to be charmed thus; and so no wonder if the devil took him at his word, and used him accordingly.—*Ibid.*

[16101] Let watchfulness and prayerfulness keep pace with each other. Some are very vigilant, but too self-reliant. They resemble a sentinel who, in the dark night, discovers the foe approaching, and goes forth alone to meet an armed multitude. They lift up brave hands against their spiritual foes, but do not lift up holy hands without doubting to the Captain of our salvation. Others are very devout, but not so circumspect as they might be.—*T. R. Stevenson.*

[16102] With vigilance prayer is to be joined. When fleets near the coast at night, they give and receive signals. It is not enough that lighthouses warn them of danger; so they throw up rockets as signals, to be answered by other signals from the land. Now I think these signals are much like our prayers and the answers to them which we receive. God has set lighthouses of promises all through the Bible; but we want something more than these; so He permits us to throw up rockets of desire; and He signals back to us. Therefore watch and pray; watch as those that are talking with God; watch as those that have felt the affinity of God's soul with theirs, and are living as in the presence of the invisible One. Then watching will become easy, and then it will become potent.—*Ward Beecher.*

### III. CAUTIONS RESPECTING THIS DUTY.

[16103] Natures that are constitutionally over-prone to vigilance are apt conscientiously to redouble that which they do not need in such measure. They are of opinion that fear is almost a positive Christian grace. They not only set a needless number of sentinels about the dwelling of their soul, but they seem to frequent the company of the sentinels without more than that of guests that are, or should be, within. Many a man has little time for Christ inside, because he is so busy watching the devil outside. There is a religion which is more in fear of evil than in enjoyment of good. There are a great many men that have never yet known the profound philosophy of the command: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome

evil with good." The way to overcome evil is, sometimes, to watch it; but a man who does nothing but watch evil will never overcome it.—*Ibid.*

[See Art. "Watchfulness," Vol. III., Section X. ("VIRTUES"), p. 66.]

## PERSEVERANCE AND PROGRESS.

### I. ENCOURAGEMENTS TO THE CHRISTIAN TO PERSEVERE IN HIS STRUGGLE AGAINST SIN.

[16104] He who has parted with the past by the power of Christ shall by that power be preserved in the future. The hand which has cut him off from a past of the Evil One's, will bind him to a future of His own.—*P. B. Power.*

[16105] "My sheep shall never perish; I give unto them eternal life," &c. Are we not entitled to gather from these words the assurance that all who by the secret communication of His grace have had this life transfused into their souls shall be securely and eternally upheld by the mighty power of Christ, so that they shall never perish?—not so upheld, whatever they may afterwards be or do, not so upheld that the thought of their security may slacken their own diligence or tempt them to transgress, but so that their very sense of such a power as that of Jesus, ever with them to protect and bless, shall operate as a new spring and impulse to all holy activities, and shall keep them from ever becoming or ever doing that whereby His friendship would be finally and for ever forfeited and lost.—*Rev. W. Hanna, D.D., LL.D.*

[16106] Sorrow does not conquer the spirit, woes without and distresses within cannot destroy when a rill from the living waters flows to the deepest root. Truly, says the Psalmist, and truthfully echo our hearts in all conditions of earthly being: "All my springs are in Thee."

[See Art. "Perseverance," Vol. III., Section X. ("VIRTUES"), p. 264.]

### II. NATURE OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESSION.

1 The progress of the Christian soldier means not only action but advance.

[16107] A door turning upon its hinges is in a state of motion, but it never advances. A chariot moving upon wheels is not only in motion, but goes onward. The conduct of some persons in religion resembles the former—there is action, but no advancement; they move, but it is on hinges, not on wheels.—*J. Angel James.*

2 This progress is sure and steady, though often slow on account of difficulties and hindrances.

[16108] It is not with a rush and a spring that we are to reach Christ's character, and attain to perfect saintship; but step by step, foot by foot, hand over hand, we are slowly and often painfully to mount the ladder that rests on earth, and rises to heaven.—*T. Guthrie, D.D.*

[16109] He doth not stand still, but gets ground by his steps: "They go from strength to strength" (Psa. lxxxiv. 4); "From faith to faith" (Rom. i. 17). He is ever going forward in heaven's way, and never thinks of sitting down till he comes to his Father's house. Sometimes, indeed, he is so straitened that he can only creep, at other times he is enlarged that he can run; but at all times he is going on towards perfection. The light of his holiness, though at first but glimmering, is always growing, and shines brighter and brighter till perfect day (Prov. iv. 18).—*G. Swinnoch.*

3 This progress is not miraculous, but the result of varied culture and training.

[16110] This kind of manhood is not reached by a sudden leap. Its growth is not rapid, like Jonah's gourd, but solid and steady, like that of the cedar or the oak. It must be rocked by storms, hardened by winter blasts, and expanded by summer warmth.—*Robert Ann.*

### III. ITS NECESSITY.

[16111] A child that stayeth at one stature, and never groweth bigger, is a monster. Unless we go forward, we slip back.—*Ep. Jewel.*

[16112] It is easy to keep that armour bright which is daily used, but hanging by the walls till it is rusty it will ask some time and pains to furbish it over again: if an instrument be daily played upon, it is easily kept in tune; but let it be but a while neglected and cast into a corner, the strings break, the bridge flies off, and no small labour is required to bring it into order again. And thus also it is in things spiritual, in the performance of holy duties, if we continue them with a settled constancy, they will be easy, familiar, and delightful to us; but if once broken off, and intermitted, it is a new work to begin again, and will not be reduced to the former estate but with much endeavour and great difficulty.—*Spencer.*

### IV. ITS INTIMATE CONNECTION WITH CHRISTIANITY.

1 Progress is conterminous with Christendom.

[16113] Outside the pale of Christendom all is stationary; there have been notable outbursts



of material wealth and splendour, transient flashes even of intellectual brilliancy, as in the Caliphates and the Mogul Empire, though the light in these cases was mainly borrowed; real and sustained progress there has been none. Japan, to whatever she may be destined to come, has kindled her new civilization with a coal taken from the Christian hearth. Before Christendom there was in the world generally nothing but material preparation carried on through a series of empires, each of which in turn yielded to the material law of decay. The exceptions were Judæa, Greece, and Rome. Jewish progress terminated in Christendom, to which, when the fulness of time was come, Judaism delivered its principle of life, and having done so itself became typically stationary. Christendom also received and assimilated the parts of Greece and Rome, in each of which progress, though real and brilliant, so far at least as intellect and politics were concerned, was comparatively brief, and carried in it from the first its own moral death-warrant. We are vaguely conscious of this fact, but we do not apprehend it distinctly because we are accustomed to talk in general terms of the progress of mankind, forgetting that the mass of mankind is not progressive, but, on the contrary, clings to and consecrates the past, as in theory and sentiment did even the Greek and the Roman.—*Goldwin Smith.*

- 2 Christianity alone among all the religions of the world recognizes man's capacity for progress, in the provision it makes for his spiritual advancement.

[16114] It says not, "This shalt thou do," and "This shalt thou not do." It is no system of rules. Its standard of moral conduct is not the observance of any law. Rules it may give, but these are only occasional and not essential—rather the landmarks which keep us from losing the path, than the very goal which we are bidden to attain. Law and Christianity are essentially different. Law is in its very nature restricted. It imposes a limit which seems to imply that human duty and human responsibility are also finite. The Gospel places no bounds to the fields which it opens before us; it leaves no room for self-complacency in the thought of the possible fulfilment of all that is required of us. For law it substitutes an idea, for finite rules a pattern of infinite perfection. The image of the Son of God, the Man Christ Jesus, presented to us so clearly in the Gospels that we cannot mistake the portraiture, and yet not so fully but that we need the exercise of our highest faculties to fill in the finer lines of the picture, an image which more than satisfies all our aspirations after moral beauty, which is the true heavenly counterpart to that vague conception of something noble and good and true beyond expression in humanity, which we feel cannot be a mere idle dream, yet which elsewhere has found no response—this image it is which in Christianity has supplanted the law of ordinances.

This is presented to us for our daily and hourly study, that by constant contemplation it may grow upon us, and mould us after its own fashion; that viewing face to face this effulgence of the Divine glory, our visage too may be lit up with some faint rays of its splendour, which shall grow ever brighter and brighter as we gaze and gaze again; that as the light before us appears more brilliant, the clouds behind us and about us may appear ever darker and darker by contrast, and thus, so far from thinking we have ever attained, so far from yearning after those things which are behind, we may become more sensible of the immeasurable distance which separates us from God, and more eager for closer communion with Him. If then we speak of peace as the lot of the Christian, we mean something very different from the peace of inactivity. In no such sense will he enjoy rest. His life must be one unbroken struggle, one continual going on unto perfection.—*Ep. Lightfoot.*

## V. ITS CANONS.

- 1 A true progress must be the progress of man.

[16115] Society may be well organized, while man himself is barbarous and selfish. And yet more certainly, man's conquests over matter are no adequate measure of the true progress of man. For man, although dwelling in a material form and on the confines of a world of matter, is yet in himself an imperishable and spiritual being, linked by his higher nature to an immaterial world. Man can analyze, mould, and employ matter, precisely because he is superior to it. He cannot himself, in his inmost being, be raised by that which is beneath him, and which yields to the vigour of his thought and of his hands. Comprehend our matchless dignity in our Creator's world. Each of us *has*, nay rather each of us *is*, that with which nothing material, be it force, or magnitude, or law, be it fluid or mineral, be it atom or planet, can rightly challenge comparison. Each of us is, in the depth of his personality, a spiritual substance. This substance is without extent, without form, without colour, unseen, impalpable. This substance is so subtle, that in its mysterious and inaccessible retreats it can be detected neither by the knife of the anatomist nor by the keen observation of the psychologist. This substance is so living and strong, that each member, each nerve of your body, each fold, each tissue of your brain, is at once its instrument, and the proof of its presence, and its empire. The human soul! who that has pondered, even superficially, over the mysterious depths of life within him—depths of which he knows so little, yet which are so intimately himself—can submit to the falsehood and degradation of the theory which makes man's real progress to consist of a mere succession in the external modifications of senseless matter?—*Canon Liddon.*

**2 Progress must embrace the whole individual man, and the whole human race.**

[16116] It must not consist in the undue development of a single power or faculty, to the prejudice of other sides or capacities of man's complex being. Let me suggest a single illustration of my meaning from our experience and circumstances in this place. We have no violent temptations here [at Oxford] to sacrifice higher interests to industrial or material ones. We have, for instance, no sympathy with men of whom it has been said, that their names might be found in the Book of Life, if the Book of Life could be supposed to be a ledger. If not by the grace of God and the illumination of His truth, yet at least by the generous impulses of a liberal education, we desiderate some higher form of progress than that which solely consists in refashioning and utilizing matter. Thus to some among us the progress of man seems to be exactly coextensive with the growth of his mind. "Only inform, exercise, strengthen, sharpen, widen, unfold, develop the human intellect, and the human intellect will become the instrument of a true and necessary progress." A doctrine, which, be it what else it may, is at least familiar, and indeed certain, for obvious reasons, to find acceptance and welcome in this home and sanctuary of high education!—*Ibid.*

[16117] Men perceive that a pure intellectualism is apt to fall short even of the lower measures of duty. When it is unbalanced by a warm heart and a vigorous will, the mere cultivation of mind makes a man alternately selfish and weak. Selfish; if, for instance, to the prosecution of a private speculation or to the assertion of a private theory, the faith, the moral vigour, the broadest and highest interests of others are sacrificed or postponed. Weak; when the entire man is cultivated intellect and nothing else, neither love nor resolution; when the clearness of intellectual perception contrasts grimly with the absence of any practical effort; when mental development, instead of being the crowning grace of a noble character, is but as an unseemly and unproductive fungus, that has drained out to no purpose the life and strength of its parent soul. I am constrained to ask whether anywhere else so many and such high gifts of natural genius, raised by cultivation to yet greater heights of power and beauty, are so frequently resultless as in this place? Is intellect anywhere as in Oxford so often unfolded in all its strength and subtlety only to reveal its practical incapacities, only to be poured forth on the very soil like water, while the great work of the Church and of the world so urgently needs it? And if so, why? Why but for this reason, among others? Instead of protecting and illustrating that Truth which really nerves the will for action, intellect has too often amused itself here with pulverizing all fixed convictions. It has persuaded itself that it can dispense with those high motives, without which it is itself too cold and incorporeal a thing

to be of practical service in this human world. It has learnt to rejoice in its own selfish if not aimless energy; but it really has abandoned the highest work of which it was capable; it has left to an unintellectual enthusiasm, to men of much love, if of inferior mental cultivation, the task of stimulating and guiding the true progress of mankind.—*Ibid.*

**3 Progress must embrace, at least recognize, the attendant facts, the outlying conditions of human life.**

[16118] The fact of the Fall, with its moral and intellectual consequences, must be frankly admitted by an adequate doctrine of human improvement. Undoubtedly that fact is energetically denied by several of the schools of modern unbelief. But it is plainly taught, and yet more widely implied and presupposed in Holy Scripture, as it is invariably asserted by the Catholic Church. How rarely do the secular theories of human progress condescend to recognize this solemn fact, even when they do not in terms reject it!—*Ibid.*

[16119] Look at the wonderful phenomenon of grace. Grace is not that mere barren, inoperative sentiment of good-will or favour on the part of the Supreme Being, which a secret anthropomorphism in the Socinian theologians led them to ascribe to Him, mainly because they were familiar with a like shadowy benevolence in themselves. In God, to will is to act, to favour is to bless; and thus grace is not simply kindly feeling on the part of God, but a positive boon conferred on man. Grace is a real and active force; it is, as the apostle says, "the power that worketh in us," illuminating the intellect, warming the heart, strengthening the will of redeemed humanity. It is the might of the Everlasting Spirit renovating man by uniting him, whether immediately or through the sacraments, to the Sacred Manhood of the Word Incarnate.—*Ibid.*

[16120] Can any theory of human progress dare to claim our attention, which, while not venturing to reject the tremendous truths of immortality, of an eternity beyond the grave, of an eternal heaven and an eternal hell, yet does in practice proceed as if they were uncertain or improbable? What a poor, what a narrow, what an unworthy conception of man's capacity for progress, is that which sees no horizon beyond the tomb! In what terms would you yourselves stigmatize a plan of education which should treat a pupil as if he were to be always a child, and as if there were no need for anticipating the powers and the opportunities, or for guarding him against the dangers of his coming manhood? Yet surely this error is trivial when compared to theirs, whose sense of the mighty future is so feeble or so false, that they would deal with an undying being as if he were more shortlived than many of the perishing beasts and trees, amid which he prepares himself for his illimitable destiny.—*Ibid.*

# VI. THE BLESSEDNESS OF PROGRESS IN THE SENSE OF "BEING."

[16121] Progress, in the sense of acquisition, is something ; but progress in the sense of being is a great deal more. To grow higher, deeper, wider, as the years go on ; to conquer difficulties, and acquire more and more power ; to feel all one's faculties unfolding, and truth descending into the soul—this makes life worth living.—*J. F. Clarke.*

# VII. THE "FORWARD" EQUALLY THE WATCHWORD IN GOD'S WORKS OF NATURE AND OF GRACE, AND IN THE CONFLICT OF THE CHRISTIAN.

[16122] "*Forward*" was the watchword of creation when God looked upon this earth, formless and void, and when darkness was upon the face of its deep—" *Forward*" until "thy face shall be covered with light and beauty, and thou shalt be the happy dwelling-place of intelligent and happy beings." The same watchword is heard mingling with the first blessing pronounced at the birth of humanity. "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it ; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every

living thing that moveth upon the earth"—a result which is being reached by the development of the human mind and the achievements of Christianity and science. "*Forward*" is the watchword of redemption. The stone cut out without hands should become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. The grain of mustard seed should become a great tree, amid the branches of which the fowls of the air should find shelter. The day of small things should be followed by a millennium of peace and triumph, and an eternity of glory. And as "*Forward*" was God's watchword to the children of Israel, so it is to the people of God in all ages. And on Christian believers is laid the obligation to "Go on unto perfection." To "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset, and run with patience the race set before them." "To press toward the mark for the prize of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—*Anon.*

# VIII. A TEST OF ADVANCEMENT.

[16123] There is perhaps no truer sign that a man is really advancing than that he is learning to forget himself, that he is losing the natural thoughts about self in the thought of One higher than himself, to whose guidance he can commit himself and all men.—*J. C. Shairp.*





# RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(Continued).

## DIVISION H.

### CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES.

#### DIVINE DIRECTION.

##### I. ITS MANIFESTATIONS.

By internal influence on the soul, and external control of the events of life.

[16124] The secret direction of Almighty God is principally seen in matters relating to the good of the soul; yet it may also be found in the concerns of this life, which a good man that fears God and begs His directions shall very often, if not at all times, find. I can call my own experience to testify that even in the external actions of my own life I was never disappointed of the best guidance and direction, when I have, in humility and sincerity, implored the secret direction and guidance of the Divine wisdom.—*Sir M. Hale*.

[16125] In the daily events of our life we mistake the Divine for the human. You may cross a street, and not know the reason why, and in that very crossing you may unconsciously be obeying a Divine suggestion. You may hold over the letter-box a letter, and suddenly you may say, "I'll not send it by this post," and your not sending it may occasion you a blessing that you never thought of. You cannot account for these things. You say, "I thought just at the last moment I would not do so;" but that is a fool's explanation of life. I rather believe that God's angels are just overhead, or just by our side, and that we do things by Divine impulse without always knowing what we are in reality doing. You say, "Yes, but don't let us be superstitious." I answer, I am more afraid of people losing veneration than I am afraid of their becoming superstitious; and it is a poor life that does not begin in veneration, and continue in worship to the end.—*J. Parker, D.D.*

##### II. ITS PROMISES.

1 "I will guide thee with Mine eye" (Psa. xxxii. 8).

[16126] A glance, not a blow—a look of directing love that at once heartens to duty, and tells duty. We must be very near Him to catch

that look, and very much in sympathy with Him to understand it; but when we do, we must be swift to obey.—*A. Maclaren*.

2 "I will go before thee" (Isa. xlv. 2).

[16127] This was a Divine promise made to Cyrus; and God has made the same promise to all who put their trust in Him. It is surely something to have a Father's promise singing in the heart. Many of us know the inspiration even of a human promise; many of us know that we never could have endured this bitter trial, or surmounted that overshadowing difficulty, had we not enjoyed the presence and hopefulness of some friendly promise in the heart. What we want to feel is the triumphant faith that says definitely to God, "Thou didst promise this, and we will wait for its fulfilment." —*J. Parker, D.D.*

3 "I will lead them in paths that they have not known" (Isa. xlii. 16).

[16128] To the Christian who seeks not to make foolish excuses, yet feels strange doubts and perplexities about the circumstances of his own life; to the Christian who cannot repress a regret, perhaps a passionate regret, that circumstances should have so painfully corresponded with his weakness, and that he should have been tried just in the way in which he believes he was least fit for trial; to such as are sorrowing, repenting, doubting, perplexed, the Bible replies by telling them that God leads men in paths that they have not known. This is, in fact, a part of the doctrine of St. Paul, that all things work together for good to them that love God. St. Paul here teaches that the events of our lives are arranged and ordered by God, that if we love Him they shall all produce good for us. And the words of Isaiah say the same thing of those events particularly which seem to our eyes an exception to the rule. There are many circumstances in our lives which are evidently meant for our good; we recognize their use to us at the very time; and if we have Christian gratitude within us we say, Thank God for this, or, Thank God for that. But there are also circumstances which do not wear this as-

pect at all; temptations for which we were not ready; burdens which seemed too heavy for us; pains which seemed quite needless; grievous disappointments which seemed to do us harm instead of good, and which, it may be, even long afterwards, do not, when we look back, appear to have been of use to us, but quite the reverse. And in all these cases, if you are really longing to serve God, you may be certain that God was leading you in paths that you had not known.—*Bp. Temple.*

[16129] God brings good out of evil, and sometimes what we call evil is not so evil in reality as that which we, in our ignorance, would put in its place. These perplexities cannot always be explained. But many of them can and are. Many times what we fancied was hurtful has been of the greatest service; what we flinched from has made us happier; what we dreaded has come and has gone, and has left a blessing behind it. Many a time what we longed for has been denied us, and the denial has made us happier than if we had obtained it. He must be very short-sighted indeed who cannot see in his own life many instances of his having been led by paths that he did not know. But how is it done? How can we suppose that the course of the universe is changed to suit our case? How can we suppose that events are adapted to us when there are millions besides ourselves to be considered? Nay, does not every step in the progress of science tend to the contrary conclusion? and are we not every day more and more led to believe that the world moves on by a rule and an order which God has given it, and with which He will not interfere, seeing that it was made perfect in the first instance? Can we suppose that one of us, weak and sinful and blind as we are, can be of so much value in the eyes of the Lord of all, that He will change the path of His chariot-wheels, that we may be guided where we need to go? Now when we are troubled with such thoughts, and inclined to lose that absolute trust in God's tenderness which this doctrine is meant to teach, let us first remember that God is not a man, nor is His government of the world like our government of a machine. We can only aim at one purpose; He can embrace many aims. We could either guide by a rule or by a discretion to meet each case. But God is not so limited, and His rules being the breath of His own Spirit, can at once hold a fixed course, and yet be prepared to suit the needs of every individual soul that comes across their operation.—*Ibid.*

[16130] Our life may suit our needs, either by the outer being adapted to the inner, or by the inner being adapted to the outer. What if we were to say that if you love God, He will put within you a magic power by which everything that happens to your soul shall be changed to suit your spiritual need? He will fill you with a spirit which shall extract from every circumstance of life just that which your soul really

requires; say rather, He Himself will extract it and give it to your soul at the moment when it is wanted. The events shall remain the same in their mere material character, but their effect upon you shall be different. The course of the outer world shall remain precisely what its own laws prescribed, and yet the spiritual power of it, as it reaches you, shall be moulded and directed as will be best for you.—*Ibid.*

### III. ITS INFINITE LOVE AND WISDOM.

[16131] As Jacob drove on as the little ones were able to bear, so doth God proportion His dispensations to His people's strength, not to their deservings, but He considers what they are able to bear. Either God keeps off greater trials, or gives in greater strength; a sweeter sense of His love, or a greater measure of gracious support. A child would sink under that load that a strong back bears without any grudging.—*T. Manton, D.D.*

[16132] A renewed man is said to be led by the Spirit (Rom. viii. 14), not dragged, not forced; the putting a bias and aptitude in the will is the work of the Spirit quickening it; but the moving the will to God by the strength of this bias is voluntary, and the act of the creature. The Spirit leads, as a Father doth a child by the hand; the father gave him that principle of life, and conducts him and hands him in his motion; but the child hath a principle of motion in himself, and a will to move.—*Charnock.*

### IV. THE CHRISTIAN'S NEED OF PRAYER FOR DIVINE DIRECTION.

For this, as for every other blessing, God says, "Ask, and it shall be given you."

[16133] I believe that wherever guidance is honestly and simply sought it is certainly given. As to our discernment of it I believe it depends upon the measure in which we are walking in the light. One indulged sin may so cloud the sky that it spreads a mist, so that to see what God is doing is impossible.—*J. Newton, M.A.*

[16134] The man who in a conflict of duty quietly shuts out other counsellors, and meditates and prays face to face with God, will seldom doubt what he ought to do, for he can decide between the two claims of duty by appealing to a law higher than either.—*Anon.*

[16135] Let us not try to manage our little troubles by ourselves, lest greater ones spring out of them. Little troubles are like little seed, they are small enough in themselves, but they are capable of producing great and important results. The oak is the produce of the acorn, the tangled brier comes from a seed on which no thorn is to be seen; the Christian, who will manage his little troubles by himself, will soon find that he must manage much greater ones than he bargained for at first.—*Ibid.*



[16136] There is nothing so small but that we may honour God by asking His guidance of it, or insult Him by taking it into our own hands.—*J. Ruskin.*

[16137] Whosoever is really earnest for Divine direction, more anxious to know what the Lord would have him do than to know what is for his own present ease or worldly interest, and who confides the case to Him who giveth wisdom liberally, and upbraideth not, may count on it very confidently that the Lord will send forth His light.—*J. Hamilton.*

[16138] As the sails of a ship carry it into the harbour, so prayer carries us to the throne and bosom of God. But as the sails cannot of themselves speed the progress of the vessel, unless filled with a favourable breeze, so the Holy Spirit must breathe upon our hearts, or our prayers will be motionless and lifeless.—*Toplady.*

[16139] John Newton thinks, that neither the casting of lots, the opening of the Bible at a venture, nor the sudden impression of a text, nor freedom in prayer over a matter, nor a dream, furnishes any reliable direction. The Lord rather opens and shuts, throws down the walls of difficulty, or hedges the way with thorns, for those who confidently seek His guidance by prayer. They know that their concerns are in His hands, and fear to run before He sends, or to delay when He directs an advance.—*Anon.*

[16140] There was a great contention betwixt Adonijah and Solomon who should reign, and there was great parts taking: priests were against priests, captains against captains, and mighty men against mighty men; Nathan in this case adviseth Bathsheba to go to David himself, and to know his pleasure in the business. So in points of faith and matters of religion, when council is against council, assembly against assembly, writer against writer, preacher against preacher, &c., let us fly unto the Scripture, and put on the resolution of David (Psa. lxxxv. 8): "I will hear what God the Lord will say in the business."—*N. Rogers.*

[16141] Do you feel that you have lost your way in life? Then God Himself will show you your way. Are you utterly helpless, worn out, body and soul? Then God's eternal love is ready and willing to help you up, and revive you. Are you wearied with doubts and terrors? Then God's eternal light is ready to show you your way; God's eternal peace ready to give you peace. Do you feel yourself full of sins and faults? Then take heart; for God's unchangeable will is, to take away those sins, and purge you from those faults.—*Rev. C. Kingsley.*

[16142] Prayer is a haven to the shipwrecked mariner, an anchor to them that are sinking in the waves, a staff to the limbs that totter, a mine of jewels to the poor, a security to the rich, a healer of diseases, and a guardian of health.

Prayer at once secures the continuance of our blessings, and dissipates the cloud of our calamities. Oh, blessed prayer! thou art the unwearied conqueror of human woes, the firm foundation of human happiness, the source of ever-during joy, the mother of philosophy. The man who can pray truly, though languishing in extremest indigence, is richer than all beside; whilst the wretch who never bowed the knee, though proudly seated as monarch of nations, is of all men most destitute.—*Chrysostom.*

## V. THE CHRISTIAN'S NEED OF FAITH IN DIVINE DIRECTION.

A trustful confidence in the guidance of God is essential to the Christian life.

[16143] O holiest! in whom the light of God Burns unconsuming; who through desert-lands Dost guide Thy people; from whose riven hands

We take the bread of life; whose feet have trod The hot rock-ledges and the cool green sod,  
All is in Thee, and he who understands Thy staff of comfort and Thy smiting rod  
May find the fountain underneath the sands.

—*Anon.*

[16144] There are no true believers who will part with their faith herein for the whole world; namely, that the Lord Jesus Christ is able, by His Divine power and presence, immediately to aid, assist, relieve, and deliver them in every moment of their surprisals, fears, and dangers, in every trial or duty they may be called unto, in every difficulty they have to conflict withal.—*Ibid.*

## VI. THE HELPLESSNESS OF MAN'S SELF-GUIDANCE.

[16145] Just as if a master, who had given his scholar charge to follow wheresoever he might lead, when he sees him forestalling, and desiring to learn all things of himself, should permit him to go utterly astray; and when he had proved him incompetent to acquire the knowledge, should thereupon at length introduce to him what himself has to teach: so God also commanded men in the beginning to trace Him by the idea which the creation gives; but since they would not, He, after showing by the experiment that they are not sufficient for themselves, conducts them again unto Him by another way.—*Chrysostom.*

[16146] In passing along the path of life unless we have the light of heaven shed upon us, every bold spirit is seized with dismay, the heart fails and the feet falter. To accomplish some lofty object, skill and judgment may lend their aid; but skill and judgment are both vain, if heaven be not our friend.—*Anon.*

[16147] A merchant, though he owns the ship, and hath stored it with goods, yet, because he hath no skill in the art of navigation, he

suffereth the pilot to guide it. Certainly we shall but shipwreck ourselves unless we give up ourselves to be guided by the Spirit of God according to His will.—*T. Manton, D.D.*

## DIVINE PROTECTION.

### I. SPECIAL DISPLAY OF THE DIVINE PROTECTION.

#### 1 In seasons of the soul's temptation and trial.

*Christ would sooner work a miracle to restrain the enemies of His servants than leave those servants to an encounter too great for their strength.*

[16148] There is often a fear on the part of the disciple that such or such a trial would be more than he could bear; that, exposed to some particular temptation, he would not be able to resist the assault. And the fear may be altogether just, so far as it arises from comparing the strength then possessed with the danger then supposed. But the fear is altogether unjust, so far as it assumes the possibility of God's exposing His people to a trial, for which He does not communicate adequate grace. We might not be able always to die for Christ; but we are not always called to die for Christ. If we were called to die for Him, then, if indeed we be His true-hearted followers, we may be confident that we should be strengthened to die for Him—die, even as martyrs died, with a smile upon the cheek, with a song upon the lip. We may not always feel as if we could in a moment resign without a murmur this or that object of devoted affection; but wait till we are actually called upon to resign it, and then, if we be truly of those who acknowledge God in all their ways, we shall find ourselves enabled with meekness to exclaim, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Doubtless, if the disciples had been required to die for Christ before Christ had died for them, they would have drawn back in dismay and through apostasy made shipwreck of the soul. But the merciful Redeemer knew this, and, that they might not be brought too soon to the cross, He put forth His power and struck down the crowd. And we take this as nothing but an evidence or illustration of what is being continually done on behalf of the Church. Trials are not accidents; they may be often unexpected by us, they are never unprovided for by God. We are warranted by Scripture in considering God as holding, so to speak, the balances in His hand. In one scale He puts the trial, in the other the strength; but the trial does not come to our share, till outweighed by the strength which He sees fit to communicate. And, if anything can, this should encourage us to "patient continuance in well doing." The crowd may be threatening us, but the crowd cannot seize us, so long as we

are too weak to bear the assault. Christ will always be in the midst of that crowd; and sooner than they shall touch a hair of our heads, till He have imparted grace to our confessing Him before men, He will put forth a supernatural restraint, and "make the wrath of man praise Him" by allowing our escape. It may be quite true that a certain amount of trial would endanger our salvation as overmatching our constancy, notwithstanding the saying, "Those that Thou gavest me I have kept;" but do you think that the blessed Saviour can either observe so carelessly, or calculate so wrongly, as to risk the fulfilment of His purpose by leaving it to hinge on our deportment in circumstances disproportioned to our strength? Let us fear to do Him so great an injustice; He is too wise, too good, too watchful for that. Not that we are to feel sure of being never overcome; but we may be sure of never being so placed that we cannot help being overcome.—*Rev. H. Melville, B.D.*

#### 2 In the conflicts of the universal Church.

[16149] God sits at the stern of His Church; sometimes it is as a ship tossed upon the waves, oh, thou afflicted and tossed; but cannot God bring this ship to haven, though it meet with a storm upon the sea? The ship in the Gospel was tossed, because sin was in it; but it was not overwhelmed, because Christ was in it. Christ is in the ship of His Church, fear not sinking; the Church's anchor is cast in heaven. Do not we think God loves His Church, and takes as much care of it as we can? The names of the twelve tribes were on Aaron's breast, signifying how near to God's heart His people are; they are His portion, and shall that be lost? His glory, and shall that be finally eclipsed? No, certainly. God can deliver His Church, not only from, but by opposition; the Church's pangs shall help forward her deliverance.—*Anon.*

### II. THE COMFORTS, ENCOURAGEMENTS, AND BLESSEDNESS OF ITS REALIZATION.

[16150] Though no friend, no man, be with thee, fear nothing! Thy God is here.—*Dinter.*

[16151] "Underneath are the everlasting arms." What child of God was ever permitted to fall lower than God's "underneath"?—*H. Gill.*

[16152] Be not faint-hearted in misfortune. When God causes a tree to be hewn down He takes care that His birds can nestle on another.—*Anon.*

[16153] God accompanies thee, His child—fear not! On each spot that thou standest is an angel of protection; where thou art is thy God; where thy God is there is thy Saviour.—*Ibid.*

[16154] A man in a trance saw himself locked up in a house of steel, through the walls of

which, as through walls of glass, he could see his enemies assailing him with swords, spears, and bayonets; but his life was safe, for his fortress was locked within. So is the Christian secure amid the assaults of the world.—*C. Evans.*

[16155] Solomon slept with armed men round his bed, and thus slumbered securely; but Solomon's father slept one night on the bare ground—not in a palace—with no moat round his castle wall,—but he slept quite as safely as his son, for he said, "I laid me down and slept, and I awaked, for the Lord sustained me."—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

[16156] The Providence which watches over the affairs of men works out of their mistakes, at times, a healthier issue than could have been accomplished by their wisest forethought.—*J. A. Froude.*

[16157] It was once said by Solon, "No man ought to be called a happy man till he dies," because he does not know what his life is to be; but Christians may always call themselves happy men here, because, wherever their tent is carried, they need never pitch it where the cloud does not move, and where they are not surrounded by a circle of fire. "I will be a wall of fire round about them, and their glory in the midst." They cannot dwell where God is not householder, warder, and bulwark of salvation.—*Anon.*

[16158] Some have said that a shelter becomes doubly calm and pleasing when surrounding tempests beat its sides harmless; that the domestic hearth is more cheerful when flakes of snow gather on the windows, and when little children, looking out into the darkling storm, return from the lattice with additional pleasure to a parent's embrace, while cheerful embers gild by reflected fires their still more cheerful faces, and parental piety descants on the goodness of God and the claims of the poor. All such ideas find their substantiation in the highest sense in his experience, who, amidst the wildest commotions of earth, takes refuge in a promising covenant-keeping God. Like the alarmed bird, whose grasp of the bending bough becomes only the stronger for the very winds by which the tree is shaken.—*Ibid.*

[16159] It is with the outward man as it is with the seas, though the strength of the stream run one way, yet if the wind blow contrary, it moves, and stirs, and strives, and disquiets it: so when losses and crosses come, they break the frame and strength of the outward man, but the inward man is like the dry ground, let the wind blow never so violent, yet it moves not, it stands firm.—*J. Preston.*

[16160] It cannot but bring strong security to the soul to know that, in all variety of changes and intercourse of good and bad events, God is our God; hath such a disposing hand; whatso-

ever befalls us, all serves to bring God's electing love and our glorification together. God's providence serveth His purpose to save us. All sufferings, all blessings, all ordinances, all graces, all common gifts—nay, our very falls, yea, Satan himself, with all his instruments—as overmastered and ruled by God, have this injunction upon them, to further God's intendment to us and a prohibition to do us no harm.—*Sibbes.*

[16161] Of how many of the calamities and sorrows of this life is it true that, guided by the unerring lines of God's providence, they come very near us, and yet touch us not, because it is not His will! "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee."—*Anon.*

[16162] O thou blessed security, in which we have to rejoice through Christ! There is no storm whose power breaks not in Him—no evil which is not transformed by Him into a blessing. He extends for us over all chasms the bridge of His almighty protection: He bears us on eagle's wings over rivers and mountains. The prospect of the future of our life is clear and serene until beyond the day of judgment. The stones of stumbling are removed from our path, and the ambuscades portending danger are disbanded, or at least disarmed. Oh, happy then are those who, escaped from the errors of the world, have cast their anchor on the bright shore of the eternal gospel, and, supported by the Friend who promises and provides everything, walk on the road of their pilgrimage which leads to the city of golden streets! It is in the ranks of these pilgrims, and here only, where is sung the great song of victory: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"—*Krummacker.*

### III. THE CONDESCENDING PITY OF GOD HEREIN MANIFESTED.

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" (Psa. viii. 4.)

*The consideration of man's insignificance, while prompting profoundest reverence and humility, must never provoke distrust of God's continued care of His people.*

[16163] That man, when contemplating the magnitude and extent of the works of God, should be strongly impressed with his own comparative nothingness, and be deeply humbled in the presence of such greatness, is no more than might be expected. But to conclude that, because God has done so much for us, He will do no more—that because His works are in our view boundless and infinite, any one of them should be considered by Him so little as to be beneath His notice and care, is founded upon misconception and error, which a little calm consideration will very much tend to remove. To the mind of God it is impossible that anything can seem great and glorious in the sense in which it so seems to us. To say, therefore,



that this world, and the system of which it is a part, are utterly insignificant, when compared with the wide and wondrous universe spreading around and above us, may not be inappropriate and unbecoming with reference to our impressions and our feelings, but would manifestly be unfitted to express the thoughts of God in His survey of the works of His own hands. To talk of remoteness and nearness, of vastness and littleness, in relation to the conceptions of the Divine Being, would be the height of human folly and presumption. Natural as is the feeling which should prompt us to exclaim, "Lord, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" when we think of our own unworthiness, it would be a gross perversion and abuse of the sentiment to turn it into an argument against the continued exercise of a wise and providential administration.—*Thos. Madge, D.D.*

[16164] When we think only of ourselves, of the little that we have done and of the little that we can do, in requital of the benefits we have received, we may well wonder at the continuance of the Divine bounty, and hesitate in believing that any further care will be exercised towards us. But when from ourselves we rise to the consideration of the character and perfections of God, a different feeling springs up in our minds, and doubt and distrust give place to confidence and hope. We then perceive the illusion under which we have been labouring—that though to us this world, compared with the whole system of the universe, may seem an inconsiderable object, it cannot so appear in the sight of Him who made it, because He is unaffected by those notions of greatness and vastness which so influence our minds, because with Him the care and government of the whole is the care and government of each constituent part, and because, in fact, we trace the same display of wisdom and skill in the structure of what we call the meanest and minutest as in the greatest and grandest of His works—from the worm that crawls in the dust, to the elephant that strides the desert—from the delicate tints of the petal that drinks the morning dew, to the gaudier colours of the rainbow that spans the surface of the sky.—*Ibid.*

[16165] It is not to be believed that God has conferred upon His creatures high powers and noble faculties except for high and noble purposes; but what important purpose, what great object, can be answered by that propensity of the human mind to refer all things to an intelligent First Cause—to be for ever busying itself with thoughts that wander into eternity—if he had not been designed for that heaven towards which his faith and hopes are ever advancing? Is there no meaning in this? Do we see in it no proof, not only that our Creator *has* been mindful of us, but that He *will* be mindful of us, and has formed us for Himself, to seek and find our happiness in Him?—*Ibid.*

[16166] When He who was in the "form of God" took upon Himself the "form of a ser-

vant," He opened our eyes to new visions of what divineness is. We had thought God's greatness and blessedness lay in this most of all, that He was the supreme "Lord and Master" of every creature; that for His honour were all things made; that He gave laws to the elements and set the stars in their courses; that He could, when He chose, command a universe of servants; that angels flew at His word and winds and lightnings did His bidding; that seas and forests shouted forth His praise! Behold, we did with our God as the nations with their kings; we called Him "Greatest" because He exercised authority over us! But we have found out better. The King's Son came among us. We called Him our "Lord and Master," and we said well; but He was as one who served us! Now we know that the Father on high is like unto Him. The divinest part of His relationship to His creatures lies here, that, being Lord of all, He makes Himself the servant of all. How is He by day and night creation's unwearied watcher, provider, attendant, benefactor! The lions roar and He feedeth them. Not a sparrow falls but He heeds it. The lilies spin not, yet He clothes them. True, patient minister to each creature's need, in whose loving eyes nothing is too minute to be remembered nor too mean to be served; He is for ever with tender humble carefulness laying His might and His providence and His inventiveness and His tastefulness at the service of all creation.—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

#### IV. THE DANGER OF AN INDEPENDENT SECURITY.

Man's strength apart from God is utter weakness.

[16167] We read in Deut. xxii. 6, the whilst the bird keeps her nest, and sits upon her eggs, or young ones, God undertook the protection of her; none might touch her or hurt her; but when she left her nest and forsook her eggs, she was in danger. Thus it is with him that keeps himself in his way, the angels are commanded to preserve him (Psa. xci. 11). But going out and wandering from our place, we are like the bird that wandereth from her nest.—*N. Rogers.*

[16168] The grand security of the gifts of God is that it is God who gives them. The Giver lives for ever, and is always at hand. I do not think He will give us any other security, and I am sure we can have none so strong. Unbelief, like Eve, craves a security independent of God. But independence of God is death; and faith, accepting the living God as the security of His own promises, finds in such dependence not only security, but life.—*Anon.*

N.B.—Dependence is the very condition of creaturehood. Independence in its only real and possible form belongs to the believer who depends neither primarily upon his fellow-man nor upon his own self, but upon God, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being."

## CHRISTIAN HERITAGE.

### I. THE CHRISTIAN'S HERITAGE GENERALLY CONSIDERED.

#### As to its extent and nature.

*They are in the highest and truest sense unlimited* (1 Cor. iii. 21).

[16169] It is here inferred that, beyond all that is eternal in human nature, *all other created things belong to the Christian*, and yet on few things do we seem so dependent. There is the lightning flaming into our dwellings, the hail-storm devastating our fields, the flood breaking through the protecting dam; there is the pestilence invading the sanctuary of home and taking away the best beloved; there is war spreading its horrors about us and destroying in a few moments the blessings of centuries—can we say that these wild, unregulated, malicious powers belong to us? These forces, which neither the mind nor the will of man can tame or control—are they ours? It certainly seems as though there were much truth in these contradictions. But we must not be misled by appearances. The apostle's statement is true—"all things are yours." For can misfortune touch us, loss bow us down, trouble overpower us, when we know that all things work together for good to them that love God? when we know that we are not the sport of chance, but that the almighty and loving hand of God sends these trials to us; when we have the experience, too, that we are purified by them as gold by the fire? Are not, then, even these hostile forces ours, and do we not derive from them a rich and pure gain?—*Dr. D. Schenkel*.

[16170] That power which multiplies thought with lightning speed, and makes it as accessible to the poor in their cottages as to the rich in their palaces; that gold which rules the hearts of men as with a magic wand; that spirit of inquiry which is studiously intent on rising to the highest heights and plunging into the lowest depths—can we say that these powers belong to us Christians? Even the gentle gifts which summer scatters over the trees and fields, will not misuse desecrate them, will not sin poison them? It is indeed true that the commercial activity of the day may serve the purposes of sin, and favour the enterprises of the wicked, but does it fail to serve the purposes of the kingdom of God, and to forward the enterprises of the righteous? It is true that a prolific press forges weapons of falsehood and sows the dragon teeth of ungodliness; but does it fail to forge the weapons of truth for us, and to scatter the seeds of truth abroad? It is true that gold enters many a house with a message of hatred and hostility; but does it cease to be an angel of love and comfort when we carry it into the dwellings of the poor and wretched? It is true that the spirit of inquiry kindles a firebrand and casts it into the very sanctuary of

God; but does it not also kindle the flame of wisdom and throw light into the sanctuary of Divine truth? And though the gifts of God are desecrated and misused, do they cease to be of use for the glory of God? Certainly there is no power and no gift of God in this world which may not be employed by us in the service of His kingdom, which may not be made, in the sense of the apostle, ours.—*Ibid*.

[16171] All things are not in the possession of Christians, to be appropriated and used according to the erring dictates of their own independent judgment and wishes. This would often prove their ruin. They are theirs, for their good, and therefore in better hands than their own, even at the disposal of the infinite God, as He sees their interests to require. The Lord Jesus Christ did not submit to poverty to secure to His followers independent fortunes; He did not submit to hunger and thirst, that they might riot in luxury; nor to shame, and reproach, and death, that they might be exalted to worldly honours and princely dignity. These, comparatively, are ciphers—things of no significance or value, except what delusion gives them. And as the gratifications of a mere worldly spirit, they deserve not the name of *things* in that inventory of blessings which infinite wisdom has made over to the Christian. They are only curses. The Christian, then, has no reason to complain of any defect in this grant, because carnal enjoyments are left out of it; no inducement to interline his charter, if he could, with such additions. All things are his, as they will subserve his best interests in time and eternity—God being both the Judge and the Director of all. If health, if riches, if honour will promote his real good, they are his. If sickness, if poverty, if obscurity or reproach will be good for him, they are his. Pardon to remove his guilt—grace to aid him in the performance of duty—strength to sustain him under trials—fears and doubts and perplexities enough to keep him watchful, and to prepare him to thank his deliverer, when he finds himself over the threshold of eternity, safe from hell—every needful supply for his temporal and spiritual well-being in time—immortal life and glory in the world to come. Thus everything in God and in creation—everything in time and everything in eternity—so far as the least value pertains to it, is the Christian's. Such is his heritage—such his all-sufficient portion. God and the created universe are his.—*Anon*.

### II. THE CHRISTIAN'S HERITAGE SPECIALLY CONSIDERED.

#### 1. The possession of man.

[16172] The highest of man's possessions is man. It is true that in every star that looks down from heaven, in every flower that opens its calyx to the sun, in every tree laden with summer fruits, in every rill that falls down the mountain side, we see the wisdom and goodness

and glory of our God ; but what would this whole creation be, with the fulness and variety of its phenomena, but for man, the image of God, called of God to leave on this created world the stamp of his spirit and the impression of his nature ! How can we say "all things are ours," if we cannot first of all call man ours ? But it is man who appears to be least of all ours. How many a wealthy man would have given thousands to rescue the life of a beloved child ; but the child was snatched away. How many an illustrious man would have cheerfully laid aside his dignities, if it had been possible thereby to lengthen a beloved partner's life ; but she must be given up. How willingly would we have sacrificed a portion of our own life to redeem that of a friend ; but the sacrifice was not accepted. How then can we say that men are ours, if we cannot hinder their being snatched away from us ? It is true that what is earthly, human, and perishable in man, does not belong to us ; of that we must be deprived. But what does that signify ? All that is eternal, imperishable, and holy in human nature is ours, and cannot be snatched from us. Centuries have passed since the great apostles, called in our text Paul, Cephas, Apollos, were snatched away ; but have they ceased to be ours ? The word of repentance which they preached, has it not awakened us ? The testimony they bore to the grace in Christ, has it not converted us ? The example of love which they have set forth, has it not enlightened us ? The good fight which they fought, has it not strengthened us in our conflict with sin ? Their patient perseverance, has it not encouraged us ? Their unquenchable hope, has it not animated us ? This Paul, this Peter, this Apollos, they are ours. And not only are they ours ; all who walk in their footsteps are ours, too—all faithful witnesses to Christian truth, all heroes of the faith, all who have suffered in love. The Church of the saints, invisible, yet visible in its effects, is ours, connecting us with the old apostolic Church.—*Dr. D. Schenkel.*

[16173] Those even among men are ours who would not regard themselves as ours, and who seem to be far removed from us. Paul had been a persecutor of the Church, and became its protector. Peter was a shaken reed, and became like a rock. Apollos was a disciple of the false Greek wisdom (Acts xviii. 24), and became a scholar of Christ. We will not despair, then, of those whom we cannot call ours in reality. Whatever of truth and love is in them is already ours. If they will not pray with us, at least we will pray for them. If they will not believe with us, we will, nevertheless, believe in their conversion in the future. If they will not love with us, we will not cease to love them. If they will not hope for and press unto the eternal salvation, we will not cease to hope for them, and to press it upon them.—*Ibid.*

[16174] Why fight over Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas ? Why claim to belong to this teacher

or to that ? The ownership, in truth, is the other way. They belong to you. They are yours as part of the great inheritance which you are called freely to enjoy. Belonging to Christ you lay claim to them, and to all that they can do for you. All their gifts and all their services are bestowed for you, and are at your disposal. Paul is yours to lay, as a wise master-builder, the foundation of your faith. Apollos is yours to build on that foundation, to enrich you with his learning, and inspire you with his eloquence. Cephas is yours, with his impetuous devotion, and his stirring reminiscences, and his zeal and experience ; all that these have, and all that they are, all that in them can minister to your growth in grace are made over to you. Every variety of Christian sentiment and character is yours if you are Christians at all. You, as joint-heirs with Christ, have a vested right in them which can never be taken away. You, though to the eye of man you may have nothing, in truth possess all things.—*Canon Duckworth.*

[16175] Mere bodily ancestry is the lowest form of a great truth. The soul gives relationship. All who have lived, and, by God's help, poured their life as a soul-wine forth for the refreshment of the world, are my ancestors, my relations. All the patriarchs are mine. Not to the Jew alone are Abraham and Isaac and Jacob ; but to every man that knows how to feel like them, and revere them. All judges of Israel ; all prophets and holy priests ; all religious kings and patriotic men ; all apostles, ministers, and confessors ; all holy men of the cloister—in ages when the cloister benefited society ; the heroes of dungeons and scaffolds ; the witnesses for liberty in every age, and everywhere—these men seem to us dim and shadowy ; but we love to go back and make them more substantial. We love to search those long forgotten, and give them resurrection, and claim them as our own. I go back to them with fervent joy. Their blood is mine. It beats in me ; for the blood of Christ it is that makes of one blood all good men on earth. I am blood-kindred to all that have been blood-sprinkled from on high.—*H. W. Beecher.*

## 2 The possession of the world.

[16176] Among the items of the boundless wealth possessed by Christians, is "the world itself. . . . There is, then, a sense in which we may gain the whole world and not lose our souls. Nay, . . . it is only through care for the soul that the world in any true sense can be gained at all. St. Paul speaks of the whole framework of creation, the whole handiwork of God, and he declares that this belongs to the Christian. Is there not something elevating and consoling in that thought ? Does it not come to us as an assuring power, as a corrective of the misgiving that men are realizing more and more the reign of law throughout the universe ? "The world is yours." We entered this world, and find ourselves in the midst of



mighty forces of which we seem to be the sport and the prey, but Christ teaches us that these forces are all under the control of a living personal will, nay more, directed by the love of a Father who is making all things to work together for the good of His children. And so the world becomes truly ours when we learn to look at its outward machinery not as a play of blind power, mocking our puny might, and working on inflexibly, regardless of our fate, but as a carefully adjusted mechanism, which love, no less than wisdom, has devised, which answers its highest end when it lights up the spirit of man to the great Artificer, and draws out their love and trust towards Him.—*Canon Duckworth.*

[16177] "The world is yours." Not only are its invisible forces and its majestic order overruled for good, but all its appliances, all its resources are yours if you are Christ's. Centre your affections on these things, work for them, live in them apart from Christ, and they truly cease to be yours. They do not belong to you, but you belong to them; you become the slave of things which perish in the using; and they crush out of you all that is generous and Divine. It is only surrender to Christ that teaches men the loftier use of this world; it is His Spirit which takes the true measure of all that it has to offer, which makes it minister to great ends, which finds in its common duties the occasion of high spiritual service, and subordinates all its change and chance to eternal good.—*Ibid.*

### 3 The possession of life.

[16178] "Life is yours"—life with its infinite meaning, its unspeakable opportunities. It may well be said that it is a solemn and, were not God around us with His grace, an awful thing to live. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, fearfully and wonderfully endowed. We have thanked God many a time for our creation, our preservation, and all the blessings of this life, but do we realize what it is to have received the gift of being?—that mysterious gift bestowed without seeking the consent of our will, and which God maintains day by day without taking counsel with us. Surely there come times—there must come times—when the solemnity of existence presses with almost intolerable weight upon the most careless of men. How many a man, could the choice have been offered to him, would have prayed with the patriarch of old that he might never see light, that he might perish from the womb, and abide in the darkness of death for ever, rather than issue forth to bear the tremendous burden, and to face the awful possibilities of a life like ours? And if there be no gospel, if there be no grace to help our infirmities, and to bear us up under the burden laid upon us, there is something terrible indeed in this immortal life to which we are born, and we can hardly wonder that the loss of all personal consciousness, all personal thought, will, and responsibility should be

the heaven pictured in the great religious systems of the heathen world. Yes, "life is yours." That it is so is a most momentous and disquieting truth.—*Ibid.*

[16179] There is nothing compared with this sense of individual being, this inalienable possession of a living personality and a conscious soul. But how the words of the apostle transfigure this wondrous prerogative of life, how they tell us not of a dark and tragical fact, but of a glorious and hopeful truth. "Life is yours"—all it means, all it involves, all the stores of joy or love which it has treasured in it, all that must grow out of it throughout eternity—"all is yours." For every burden, every difficulty has been borne already; the whole pressure of the strain measured by One who loves us with an infinite tenderness, and thus life through Him is made over anew to each one as an unspeakable gift, not, indeed, cleared from all its mystery, but robbed of its fear, so that, in a sense, unintelligible to others, he who is Christ's can thank God for his creation. "I am come," said Christ, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." What does this mean? Not only that a new principle of life might be imparted to the spirits of men by reunion to God through Him, but that thus, in a new and blessed sense, the old life might be theirs—theirs more abundantly than it had ever been—furnished with new motives, cheered with new hopes, dedicated to grander uses, interpreted by the perfect love of Him whose meat and drink it was to do His Father's will.—*Ibid.*

### 4 The possession of death.

[16180] "Death is yours;" death, the last enemy that shall be destroyed, the most merciless and arbitrary of tyrants, whose awful sway it is so vain to dispute. "Death is yours," says the apostle, despoiled of his terrors, then handed over to you, your slave, and not your master, for you belong to Him who has the keys of death and hell, you share the fruit of His triumphant victory over the grave. Surely there is wondrous comfort in this thought that Christ has revolutionized our relations with death, and made us conquerors, more than conquerors, where we were captives and victims before. We go to Him who holds the key to all the mysteries of our being, and we find that He does not acquiesce in the grave as the fitting destiny of man. He comes as the Lord of life, the Vanquisher of death. Others came before Him, and pondered the immortal fate of man, but none could teach it till He came who was to reveal it. Others called it awful names, or bespoke a welcome for it as a blessed escape from the vain shadow and disquiet of this unintelligible world. He accepted no weak disguise in which philosophy would veil the last enemy; He denounced him for what he was, singled him out, and challenged him to do his worst: He broke his bonds asunder because it was not possible that He should be holden of them.

Now, having led captivity captive, and having risen Himself to the power of an endless life, He says to us from whom the victory is won, "Death is yours; because I live ye shall live also." "Death is yours," timed for you by infinite love and wisdom, yours to minister to your noblest needs, to usher you out of the lower into the higher life, out of the world of shadows into the world of realities, out of the twilight of conjecture into the noontide of knowledge, out of the weak and flagging energies of earth into the untiring activities and perfect service of heaven. "Life and death, things present and things to come, all are yours." In no strained or mystical sense is that assurance true. St. Paul lived, as each one of us may live, in the serene air of that upper sphere to which faith alone can transport us, and for him old things were passed away, and all things had become new; he saw life, and death, and all human interests through a new medium, no longer distorted by the bewildering mists of earth, but clearly defined in their true proportions and their actual relations; he viewed all human concerns as from the side of the risen Christ, and in consciousness of everlasting union with Him.—*Ibid.*

[16181] Death is yours, saith the apostle, your friend, your privilege, your passage to heaven: 'tis your ignorance of it which breeds your fears about it.—*Anon.*

##### 5 The possession of time and eternity.

[16182] The past is ours. The centuries have swept away a hundred signs of human devotion; one is left, it is the cross. Thousands of words of human wisdom have been forgotten; the Word of God remains. Unions have been formed and dissolved, the Church of Christ remains. Names that once shone brightly in the firmament are now never mentioned; one name remains, it is the name Jesus Christ. Numberless hopes have vanished like the morning mist; one hope remains, is ours—the hope of eternal life. The past is ours, all that is worthy and imperishable in it. And, therefore, are the present and future ours too. Let men set up new signs, the cross alone will remain. Let them utter beautiful and wondrous words, they will all cease to be heard; the Divine Word—our word—will remain. Let unions be formed, the Church is alone eternal. Let new names rise into favour, they will all disappear like meteors, while the name of Christ will be like the sun. Let new hopes delude men, our hope is an anchor sure and steadfast. The dark night conceals the present and the future, but we need not tremble. The day will come, and the day-star will arise in our hearts. The future is certainly ours, for all things are ours. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."—*Dr. D. Schenkel.*

### III. THE CROWNING JOY AND PRIVILEGE, AS WELL AS SOLE FOUNDATION, OF THE HERITAGE.

#### The Divine ownership.

"Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 22).

[16183] That we belong to Christ, and through Christ to God, is a part, and a chief part, of our privilege. It is not simply that we enter on the command of all things because we are divinely owned, but to be divinely owned is itself our highest dignity. This passage is, I believe, one of those which throw the grandest light on the meaning of redemption. Do we not often think of Christ's work as if it meant much less than St. Paul implies here? We conceive of Him as purchasing certain things for us by His cross and passion; we know that the fruits of His sacrifice are pardon, and cleansing, and reconciliation; but the supreme benefit which by His precious blood-shedding He hath obtained for us is this—that He has bought us, and has redeemed us from the hand of the enemy, in order that we may belong to the enemy no more, but henceforth for ever to our rightful Lord. He has bought us that He may give us to God. That is the sublimest view of salvation, that is the blessing of all blessings, the highest that it is possible for man to receive—to become what God created us to be, to cease to be our own, and to become His, to be no longer self-made aliens, but to come back in filial dependence to our Father's home, our hearts filled with the long-lost spirit of adoption, whereby we say, "Not mine, but Thine, O Lord—Thine to do Thy will, Thine to be dealt with as it pleaseth Thee, Thine that I may neither live to myself nor die to myself, but live and die to Thee alone." That is redemption. "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Yes, for "all Mine are Thine, and these are Mine." What infinite security those words breathe!—*Canon Duckworth.*

### IV. THE CONDITIONS OF THE HERITAGE.

We must have been sealed by the Holy Ghost as belonging to Christ, before the inheritance of all things can be ours.

[16184] The natural man cannot inherit the kingdom of God; therefore cannot say, "all things are mine," but must rather confess, "I belong to all things." He cannot say, "all things are dependent on me," but must say, "I am dependent on them all." An appeal to experience will confirm this. There are moments when such men feel that they are not free, that instead of ruling they are ruled by circumstances. Those only who have received the Spirit, and have become new-born sons of God, can say, "all things are ours." But how are we to receive the Holy Ghost? Man is not by nature as he should be. The self-will and disobedience of our children are constantly reminding us that they are not as we would have them be. Many

think otherwise than this, and say that we have only properly to develop human nature to make it what it should be. Let it be plainly understood that this is not what Scripture teaches us. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. We have not the Holy Ghost by nature, and must receive Him as a gift of God's grace. Jesus Christ took upon Him our nature that we might share the nature of God. "Ye are Christ's," says the apostle. We must be His that all things may be ours. He is the vine, the way, the door, the light, the life. How comes it to pass that, while these things are so, so many men are indifferent to them? Have you never heard of the sick who have accounted themselves whole, the ignorant who have thought themselves learned? This is so, too, in the region of the spiritual life. We need to become conscious of poverty. How is this consciousness to be obtained? The apostle says, "and Christ is God's." Christ, comparing Himself with the Father, could see in the Father His own image. He could say, "I and the Father are one." Is it so with us when we compare ourselves with the Father? Who of us can say, "I and the Father are one"? The Father is pure, holy, true, just. But we? Well, for the sick there is a physician. The way to become possessed of the Christian's wealth is a threefold way. The way of repentance which leads us to the knowledge of what sin is before the Father. The way of faith which causes us to find in God the Son reconciliation and redemption from sin. The way of regeneration—we are renewed and sanctified by God the Holy Ghost.—*Dr. D. Schenkel.*

#### V. THE FULNESS AND COMFORT OF THE DIVINE PROMISES, AND EVERLASTING HOPE INHERITED BY CHRISTIANS.

[16185] Every particular believer is interested in the promises made to the Church, and may plead them, and fetch in the comfort contained in them; as every citizen has the benefit of a charter, even the meanest.—*Anon.*

[16186] A silver egg was once presented to a Saxon princess. Open the silver by a secret spring, and there was found a yolk of gold. Find the spring of the gold, and it flew open and disclosed a beautiful bird. Press the wings of the bird, and in its breast was found a crown, jewelled and radiant. And even within the crown, upheld by a spring like the rest, was a ring of diamonds which fitted the finger of the princess herself. Oh, how many a promise there is within a promise in the Scripture, the silver around the gold, the gold around the jewels; yet how few of God's children ever find their way far enough among the springs to discover the crown of His rejoicing or the ring of His covenant of peace.—*Ibid.*

[16187] Christ is our "peace," how then can we be sad and heavy? He is our "Saviour," how then can we despair? He is our "way,"

how then can we err? He is our "truth," how then can we be deceived? He is our "life," how then can we die? He is our "resurrection," how then can we sleep in sin? He is our "physician," how then can we be sick and diseased? He is our "light," how then can we walk in darkness? He is our "bread," how then can we be hungry? He is our "defender," how then can we be afraid? He is our "wisdom," how then can we be ignorant? He is our "righteousness," how then can we be unrighteous? He is our "sanctification," how then can we be profane and unholy? He is our "redemption," how then can we be damned? He is our "riches," how then can we be poor? He is our "beauty," how then can we be deformed and ill-favoured? He is our "Mediator" and "Advocate," how then can our matters be unheard? He is our "head," how then can we His members perish? He is our "bishop and curate of our souls," how then can we want spiritual doctrine? He is our "door," how then can we but enter into the kingdom of heaven? To conclude, He is altogether ours, and all that ever He hath; how then can we but sail in a safe and quiet haven?—*T. Becon, D.D.*

### PERFECT FREEDOM.

#### I. DEFINITION OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM.

[16188] Negatively it is freedom from—(1) The condemnation of sin, Rom. viii. 1. (2) The rigour and curse of the law; from the law, as a covenant of works, Rom. vii. 6, viii. 2; Gal. iii. 13; from its grievous yoke and impossible demands, Acts xv. 10; Heb. ix. 10; Col. ii. 14. (3) The dominion of sin, Rom. vi. 14-18, viii. 2; the drudgery and slavery of sin, Tit. iii. 4. (4) The power of Satan, his tyrannous rule, and deceptive lures, Col. i. 13. (5) Slavish fear, Job xi. 15; Isa. xii. 2; the fear of man, fear of death, fear of falling, fear of judgment, Luke i. 74; Heb. ii. 14, 15. (6) The trammels of narrow prejudice, the restraint of party spirit, bigotry. (7) The sting of death, 1 Cor. xv. 55-57; Heb. ii. 14, 15. Positively it is to—(1) Enjoy all the blessings of Christian privilege, Rom. vi. 18-22; access to God, communion; to receive all revealed truth; the full use of all lawful comforts. (2) To serve God with a ready will, Luke i. 74, 75. (3) To carry out the dictates of an enlightened conscience, unshackled by fear, unfettered by self-will, unhindered by carnal thralldom.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes.*

[16189] It implies two essential conditions—free choice, without which we are not moral creatures, and a good choice, which makes us partakers of the Divine life. True understood, liberty may be defined as *the true fulfilment of our higher destiny.*—*Rev. E. Pressensé, D.D.*

[16190] It is not merely liberty from the yoke



of the law. It is liberty from the tyranny of obstacles which cloud the spiritual side of truth. It is liberty from spiritual rather than from intellectual dulness ; it is liberty from a state of soul which cannot apprehend truth.—*Canon Liddon.*

## II. ITS ORIGIN, SOURCE, AND NATURE.

### I "The Truth shall make you free" (John viii. 32).

*Character of the truth that liberates.*

a. Respecting God and Christ.

[16191] Blot out the thought of God, a living Person, and life becomes mean, existence unmeaning, the universe dark, and resolve is left without a stay, aspiration without a support.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

[16192] What is the truth? Christ Himself must answer, "I am the Truth." He has said so in as many words, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." If you ask why the truth can make us free, when nothing else can do so, I answer, Because the truth is a living truth, and not a dead truth; because the truth is embodied not in a system, but in a person; and that Person at once one of ourselves, and, at the same time, One immeasurably greater than we; one of ourselves, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, born into our nature, every man's brother, who has lived our life, been tempted with our temptations, died our death; and yet, while thus one of us, One also immeasurably above us; being at the same time God over all, blessed for ever, the Source of all light and all life, the Giver of all good things, the Author of all grace, the Pardoner, the Purifier, the Healer, and the Saviour, even Christ the Lord.—*Abp. Trench.*

[16193] Christ is a Liberator indeed. His own life in the flesh, as one of us, was a life of perfect freedom. Consider what the things are that bring us into bondage, and how little any of these touched Him. Are not these some of them?—the undue fear of the world, and the undue love of the world; the prizing of things worthless, the despising of things worthy; the longing after that which, if we obtain it, may be our ruin; the slighting of that which, if we miss it, we have missed all; the snatching at this world's tinsel, and leaving of heaven's gold; filling our hands with this world's pebbles, instead of heaven's jewels; suffering the near hillocks of time to hide from us the distant mountains of eternity; the false estimates of things; vain wishes, inordinate desires; these are the instruments of our bondage. But He weighed everything in the balances of eternal truth. Nothing touched or moved Him, but exactly in the measure which it ought. He was free; His life in the flesh, a life of perfect freedom. He passed through the world, ever its Master, never its servant; and He could say at the last, when that life was ending, "I have

overcome the world." In this pattern and example which He yields us, in this setting of Him and His walk in the world constantly before us, is a mighty help to as many as would fain themselves also overcome, and walk even as He walked, in the freedom of the truth.—*Ibid.*

[16194] The Lord Jesus makes us free, in that there are powers in Him, powers of the world to come laid up in Him, which we may claim—the outflowings of a Divine strength from Him, which are ever going forth upon His Church. Being ascended up on high, He "received gifts for men;" and what gift like freedom from sin, freedom in and through the truth? That He has such gifts, that He can and does make free, thousands and ten thousands have attested, and do every day attest.—*Ibid.*

[16195] Many things I know not; one thing, however, I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see; and this because a man that is called Jesus anointed my eyes. Be able to say, He has delivered me, and He is delivering me day by day, from all which would drag me down to my own ruin. He has made, and He is keeping me free, free from the bondage of the world, from the tyranny of my own lawless appetites and unruly desires, and I know that no other could do this for me; that without Him, and apart from Him, I should presently fall back under the accursed domination of these. Be able to say this, and all the false prophets of the world shall be powerless to seduce you from your faith, or to weaken your full affiance in Him who is true and the Truth, who has given this freedom to you, and who will make all who continue in His word partakers in the same glorious liberty of the children of God.—*Ibid.*

b. Respecting man.

[16196] We are a mystery to ourselves. Go to any place where nations have brought together their wealth and their inventions, and before the victories of mind you stand in reverence. Then stop to look at the passing crowds who have attained that civilization. Think of their low aims, their mean lives, their conformation only a little higher than that of brute creatures, and a painful sense of degradation steals upon you. So great and yet so mean! And so of individuals. There is not one here whose feelings have not been deeper than we can fathom—nor one who would venture to tell out to his brother man the mean, base thoughts that have crossed his heart during the last hour. Now this riddle Christ solved—He looked on man as fallen, but magnificent in his ruin. We, catching that thought from Him, speak as He spoke. But none that were born of woman ever felt this or lived this like Him. Beneath the vilest outside He saw this—a human soul, capable of endless growth; and thence He treated with what for want of a better term we may call respect, all who approached Him; not because they were titled Rabbis, or rich Pharisees, but because they

were men. Here was a germ for freedom. It is not the shackle on the wrist that constitutes the slave—but the loss of self-respect—to be treated as degraded till he feels degraded—to be subjected to the lash till he believes that he deserves the lash: and liberty is to suspect and yet reverence self: to suspect the tendency which leaves us ever on the brink of fall: to reverence that within us which is allied to God, redeemed by God the Son, and made a temple of the Holy Ghost.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

[16197] Perhaps we have seen an insect or reptile imprisoned in wood or stone. How it got there is unknown—how the particles of wood in years, or of stone in ages, grew round it, is a mystery, but not a greater mystery than the question of how man became incarcerated in evil. At last the day of emancipation came. The axe stroke was given; and the light came in, and the warmth; and the gauze wings expanded, and the eye looked bright; and the living thing stepped forth, and you saw that there was not its home. Its home was the free air of heaven. Christ taught that truth of the human soul. It is not in its right place. It never is in its right place in the dark prison-house of sin. Its home is freedom and the breath of God's life.—*Ibid.*

#### c. Respecting immortality.

[16198] Christ taught that this life is not all; that it is only a miserable state of human infancy. He taught that in words: by His life, and by His resurrection. This, again, was freedom. If there be a faith that cramps and enslaves the soul, it is the idea that this life is all. If there be one that expands and elevates, it is the thought of immortality; and this is something quite distinct from the selfish desire of happiness. It is not to enjoy, but to *be* that we long for. To enter into more and higher life; a craving which we can only part with when we sink below humanity, and forfeit it. This was the martyrs' strength. They were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might attain a better resurrection. In that hope, and the knowledge of that truth, they were free from the fear of pain and death.—*Ibid.*

#### 2 "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. iii. 17).

[16199] Freedom is not an occasional largess of the Divine Spirit; it is not merely a reward for high services or conspicuous devotion. It is the invariable accompaniment of the Spirit's true action. Or rather, it is the very atmosphere of His Presence. Wherever He really is, there is also freedom. He does not merely strike off the fetters of some narrow national prejudice, or of some antiquated ceremonialism. He does not descend from heaven to subvert an earthly despotism. He comes not that He may provide for "the freedom of man's outward individual action, consistently with the safety of human society." His mission is not to bestow an ex-

ternal, political, social freedom. For no political or social emancipation can give real liberty to an enslaved soul. And no tyranny of the state or of society can enslave a soul that has been really freed. Nor is the freedom which He sheds abroad in Christendom a poor reproduction of the restless, volatile, self-asserting, sceptical temper of Pagan Greek life, adapted to the forms and thoughts of modern civilization, and awkwardly expressing itself in Christian phraseology. If He gives liberty, it is in the broad, deep sense of that word. At His bidding, the inmost soul of man has free play; it moves hither and thither; it rises heavenward, like the lark, as if with a buoyant sense of unfettered life and power. This liberty comes with the gift of truth; it comes along with that gift, of which in its fulness the Eternal Spirit is the only Giver. He gives freedom from error for the reason; freedom from constraint for the affections; freedom for the will from the tyranny of sinful and human wills. Often has human nature imagined for itself such a freedom as this; it has sketched the outlines more or less accurately; it has sighed in vain for the reality. Such freedom is, in fact, a creation of grace; the sons of God alone enjoy it. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."—*Canon Liddon.*

[16200] The natural images which are used in Holy Scripture to set forth the presence and working of the Holy Spirit are, in different ways, suggestive of the freedom which He bestows upon the soul. The dove, which pictures His gentle movement on the soul and in the Church, suggests also the power of rising at will above the dead level of the soul into a higher region where it is at rest. The "cloven tongue like as of fire" is at once light and heat; and light and heat imply ideas of the most unrestricted freedom. What freer than the light, of which the many coloured rays, with their unequal undulations, dart through space with the same astonishing velocity? What more calculated to exhibit a natural picture of the penetrating action of Spirit in our active life than the singular transformations whereby, through well-known experiments, heat is first resolved into mechanical force, and then mechanical force or motion are again rendered back into equivalent heat? "The wind" blowing "where it listeth, while thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth;" the well of water in the soul, springing up, like a perpetual fountain, unto everlasting life; such are our Lord's own chosen symbols of the Pentecostal Gift. Do not these figures speak, in a language intelligible to all, not merely of a mysterious endowment, but also of a buoyant self-expanding life; of that range of thought, and joy of heart, and impulse and strength of will, which is the positive side of the gift of freedom? The light, the heat, the wind, the stream of water, are images not merely of the Divine force which acts upon the soul, but of the movement of the soul itself, as spiritualized and transformed by the Heavenly Visitant.—*Ibid.*

[16201] The language of the apostles when they are tracing the results of the great Pentecostal gift in the Christian soul, or in the Christian Church, is largely impregnated with the idea of Christian freedom. With St. James, the Christian no less than the Jew has to obey a law, but the Christian law is "a law of liberty." The will of the Christian, regenerate and free, rejoices to obey it. With St. Paul, the Church of Christ, the true mother of mankind, is the Jerusalem which is "free;" she is contrasted with the bondwoman, whose children Christians are not; the Christian is to stand fast in a liberty with which Christ has freed him; he is free from the "yoke of bondage" which was imposed by the synagogue. He is, if indeed he is alive unto God, free from a yet heavier yoke; he is "made free from sin, and become the servant of righteousness." St. Paul compares this freedom, "the glorious liberty of the children of God," with the "bondage of corruption;" he contrasts the "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," which gives us Christians our freedom, with the enslaving "law of sin and death." The Christian slave is essentially free, even while he still wears his chain.—*Ibid.*

[16202] The New Testament everywhere represents the gift of freedom as of the essence of the gospel. Freedom of thought, which voluntarily submits to absolute truth; freedom of affection, which hastens to embrace the Eternal Beauty; freedom of will, which yet moves harmoniously with and in submission to the will of Him "whose service is perfect freedom." For "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."—*Ibid.*

### III. ITS VARIED ASPECTS.

1 As regards the liberty which the Truth and the Spirit give.

(1) *Mental and intellectual.*

a. Christ has consecrated full liberty in the investigation of truth.

[16203] There never was greater freedom of examination than in the religion of the gospel. It challenges persuasion alone, and, far from imposing itself as an outward authority, it courts our consent, in avoiding everything that might hinder its being independent and intellectual. The Christian truth centres itself for us in the person of Jesus Christ. Consider in what way He has founded the kingdom of His doctrine, and what is His method, if I may so speak, of propagating it? "He was never," says Origen, "either a tyrant to force our approbation by the sword, or a rich man to buy it." In other words, He would have neither force nor noise. He has cursed the sword used in aid of an idea. He said to His disciples who wished to make fire descend from heaven upon the Samaritan village, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." He had no other train than the poor boatmen of Galilee. This great Liberator "lifted not His voice in the streets and public places. No one was more divested of power than the meek and gentle

Master. He showed thus the greatest respect for liberty of thought, and every restriction of His liberty is an offence that goes up direct to Him. Not only did He never use force, but He cared not for the exterior splendour of human glory. There was nothing in His appearance. He grew up as a root out of a dry ground. His Divine thoughts were as humbly clothed as Himself; He did not adorn them with the purple of human eloquence. He was poor, and spoke for the poor. He employed no fascination over the mind, and avoided all surprise. Nor was He a man of ancestry. He leaned not on the authority of the past, whose prestige is so greatly extending its chilly shadow over all that is youthful and living. No, He never invoked the voice of bygone ages. When He quoted the Scriptures, He gave them such a fresh aspect that He raised offence. He flatly contradicted all the decisions of the synagogue. He could by just right say, according to the fine expression of Tertullian, "I am not custom, I am truth." He spake not as the scribes, He did not proceed from the celebrated schools of the temple, but from the stall of Nazareth. In a word, as has been profoundly remarked, He would not found belief on prodigy. He wrought miracles as the sun spreads his beneficent rays. The helping power that was in Him He did not withhold when the sick or the blind were before Him on whom He had pity; but He avoided with care multiplying His wonderful acts, to draw the multitude to follow Him. He refused a sign from heaven when it was asked for as a decisive proof. He would not address the eyes or the imagination, and thus clog the liberty of examination. It can be said that no one protected it as He did.—*Rev. E. Pressensé, D.D.*

[16204] The kingdom of the Spirit is the home of mental liberty. From the first God has consecrated liberty of thought by withdrawing thought from the control of society. Society protects our persons and goods, and passes judgment upon our words and actions. But it cannot force the sanctuary of our thought. That mysterious world which lies open to God and to conscience can only be revealed to our fellow-men by our own voluntary act. And He who came from heaven that He might enrich the human soul by His blessed presence, raising it to new and supernatural capacities, came not to suspend, but to recognize, to carry forward, to expand, and to fertilize almost indefinitely the thought of man. He has vindicated for human thought the liberty of its expression against imperial tyranny and official superstition. The blood of those saints and martyrs of the first three centuries, whose names live for ever in the heart of the grateful Church, witnessed to the truth, that, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is, not merely moral, but mental liberty. For when the illumination of the Perfect Truth had been shed by the gift of Pentecost upon human thought, Christians became conscious of a new power, almost of the presence of a new sense, in their perception of the supernatural,



The thought which God had thus admitted to share after a measure His counsels and His mind could not but be free.—*Canon Liddon.*

b. Christ would have us raise ourselves up to the truth which liberates thought in light.

[16205] Jesus Christ was not satisfied with avoiding all appearance of force or constraint. He appealed most earnestly to examination; He solicited our inquiry, and stirred up our mental laziness; He wishes every one to search for himself, for the faith which He demands is essentially personal, and He summoned together to this inward deliberation all the faculties of human nature; He wished it to be as broad and complete as possible. Yes, Christianity asks for, demands, your investigation. It complains of one thing only—that you do not grant it fully. It says to you, See for yourselves; do not rest content with a superficial and mutilated investigation; bring together all your powers to know it. I am a great historical fact; study my beginning, my origin, as you study any other fact. I demand no exemption. Examine the evidences of history; investigate each one of them freely, conscientiously; apply the same rules to me as you do to the first book you meet. I am a doctrine, an explanation of things human and Divine. I demand the most serious attention of your reason; I complain more of its feebleness than of its development. Compare me with all the systems that have followed me in the course of ages. Set before you my explanation of the origin of things, of good and evil, with their theories, and see if my folly does not prevail over their wisdom; if it does not go farther and higher to give account of the world, and even of yourselves. I claim a Divine origin. I appeal to those hidden and profound instincts that are within you, that sense of the Infinite, those inmost needs, to those sublime perceptions by which you differ from the dumb animal that suffers, fades, and perishes entirely. Open, then, this interior eye; make use of this superior organ of knowledge. Do not have eyes that will not see. I am a living personality and not a dumb and dead book. I am not merely the doctrine of Christ, I am Christ Himself.—*Rev. E. D. Pressensé, D.D.*

[16206] Truth, in the person of Christ, appeared stripped of all ornament, of all allurements, of all material support, of all which is foreign to it; it would act upon the inmost heart and spirit by its own intrinsic virtue alone. That makes its grandeur and moral power. She would debase herself, she would dishonour herself, I do not say merely by begging for the help of force; but if she thought she could not enter our homes unless painted and disguised, though she even then refused to break open the door. This queen of the heavens will not be espoused for the worldly riches she may bear, for a wedding portion of power and glory of I do not care what dimensions, but for herself only. She wishes man when he sees her to lie at her feet. She comes with her own possessions, and there-

fore despises all that is not such. Christ at the bar of the proconsul said He was a King. He wished for no other throne than His cross. He wishes to draw every thought in captivity to that, and it is thus He triumphs in the bosom of its shadows, of its ignominy and sorrow. Will you say it is possible this was done for effect, and this triumph can be attributed to other causes than a purely moral one? It is a crucified man who presents Himself to you. Where is the constraint? Where is the force? He is nailed to a tree. Where is the prestige? It is an ignominy such as neither men nor angels ever saw the like. Where is the outward attraction? He is jeered by the mob, He is alone, but for a wretched group consisting of a few trembling women and a broken-down disciple. He has no power, but that of truth. I do not know of an instance more sublime and altogether more affecting of absolute liberty which is bequeathed to you in your opinion upon Him and His doctrine, and I exclaim with Tertullian, "If He is covered with blood and ignominy, He is indeed my Christ and my King," and I repeat with Pascal, "How this victim has dazzled the region of the mind!"—*Ibid.*

## (2) *Moral and spiritual.*

[16207] It has pleased the all-wise Disposer to encompass us from our birth by difficulty and allurements, to place us in a world where wrongdoing is often gainful, and duty rough and perilous, where many vices oppose the dictates of the inward monitor, where the body presses as a weight on the mind, and matter, by its perpetual agency on the senses, becomes a barrier between us and the spiritual world. We are in the midst of influences which menace the intellect and heart; and to be free is to withstand and conquer these.—*Anon.*

[16208] I call that mind free which masters the senses, which protects itself against animal appetites, which contemns pleasure and pain in comparison with its own energy, which penetrates beneath the body and recognizes its own reality and greatness, which passes life, not in asking what it shall eat or drink, but in hungering, thirsting, and seeking after righteousness.

I call that mind free which escapes the bondage of matter, which, instead of stopping at the material universe and making it a prison wall, passes beyond it to its Author, and finds in the radiant signatures which it everywhere bears of the Infinite Spirit, helps to its own spiritual enlargement.

I call that mind free which jealously guards its intellectual rights and powers, which calls no man master, which does not content itself with a passive or hereditary faith, which opens itself to light whencesoever it may come, which receives new truth as an angel from heaven, which, whilst consulting others, inquires still more of the oracle within itself, and uses instructions from abroad not to supersede but to quicken and exalt its own energies.

I call that mind free which sets no bounds to

its love, which is not imprisoned in itself or in a sect, which recognizes in all human beings the image of God and the rights of His children, which delights in virtue and sympathizes with suffering wherever they are seen, which conquers pride, anger, and sloth, and offers itself up a willing victim to the cause of mankind.

I call that mind free which is not passively framed by outward circumstances, which is not swept away by the torrent of events, which is not the creature of accidental impulse, but which bends events to its own improvement, and acts from an inward spring, from immutable principles which it has deliberately espoused.

I call that mind free which protects itself against the usurpations of society, which does not cower to human opinion, which feels itself accountable to a higher tribunal than man's, which respects a higher law than fashion, which respects itself too much to be the slave or tool of the many or the few.

I call that mind free which, through confidence in God and in the power of virtue, has cast off all fear but that of wrong-doing, which no menace or peril can enthrall, which is calm in the midst of tumult, and possesses itself though all else be lost.

I call that mind free which resists the bondage of habit, which does not mechanically repeat itself and copy the past, which does not live on its old virtues, which does not enslave itself to precise rules, but which forgets what is behind, listens for new and higher monitions of conscience, and rejoices to pour itself forth in fresh and higher exertions.

I call that mind free which is jealous of its own freedom, which guards itself from being merged in others, which guards its empire over itself as nobler than the empire of the world.

In fine, I call that mind free which, conscious of its affinity with God, and confiding in His promises by Jesus Christ, devotes itself faithfully to the unfolding of all its powers, which passes the bounds of time and death, which hopes to advance for ever, and which finds inexhaustible power, both for action and suffering, in the prospect of immortality.—*Ibid.*

[16209] In the kingdom of the spirit, and in it alone, the will is free. Faith in the invisible Christ, in the objective certainties of Scripture and the creed, are the instruments which the Spirit uses in the work of our moral emancipation. Over the years of past life, during which heaven has been closed to thought, because thought has been unenlightened by faith, we can only sigh with Augustine, "Suspirabem ligatus non ferro alieno, sed meâ ferreâ voluntate" (Cf. Lib. viii. c. 5). Perhaps it is so still with some of us. We are bound with the bonds of habit, of passion, of prejudice. We hug our chains. Perhaps, like the earliest Gnostics, we even dare to promise other men liberty, while knowing ourselves to be really slaves, while feeling, in the misery of our secret souls, that we are ourselves "the servants of corruption." There is no such thing as a resurrec-

tion from moral slavery, except for the soul which has laid hold on a fixed objective truth. If, as M. Renan says, God be merely "the category of the ideal," a "*résumé* of the supra-sensuous needs of man," then He is man's creature instead of being man's Creator. The idealized god of the school of Hegel is even less able to raise the prostrate will of the creature, the product of whose thought he is, than is a brute animal, or a sculptured idol, since these at least have the merit of an existence independent of the mind of the worshipper. But when, at the breath of the Divine Spirit upon the soul, heaven is opened to the eye of faith, and man looks up from his misery and his weakness to the everlasting Christ upon His throne; when that glorious series of truths, which begins with the Incarnation, and which ends with the perpetual Intercession and the Sacraments, is really grasped by the soul as certain; then assuredly freedom is possible. It is possible; for the Son has taken flesh, and died, and risen again.—*Canon Liddon.*

[16210] In this life man is in the highest sense free, not when he is conscious of choosing between good and evil; rather he is in the highest sense free, when he wills the good from the sense of inner necessity, which excludes the thought of the possibility of doing otherwise.—*J. Müller.*

[16211] If man is royal when he commands nature, and yet more royal when he commands his fellow-men, his highest exercise of empire is over himself, and he best learns to wield it by voluntary submission. He bends in very deed the knee to Christ. He prostrates himself before the mysteries of Bethlehem and Calvary. He listens to the new commandment as to the charter and secret of his freedom; and he rises a king and priest to God and the Father; he has free access to the courts of heaven; he serves one whose service alone is perfect freedom; nay, "Cui servire regnare est." He reigns over himself; and the play of thought, and feeling, and the movement of passion, and the infinite variety of his activities, do but subserve the invariable unity, the majestic force of his will. As in the material world all expansion is proportioned to the compression which precedes it; so in the moral world, due allowance being made for human self-determination, the formula still holds good, and the will acts with a force which is measured by its power of self-control.—*Canon Liddon.*

[16212] As loyal citizens of that kingdom of the Spirit which is also the kingdom of the Incarnation, you may be really free. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Political liberty is a blessing; liberty of thought is a blessing. But the greatest blessing is liberty of the conscience and the will. It is freedom from a sense of sin, when all is known to have been pardoned through the atoning blood; freedom from a slavish fear of our Father in heaven, when conscience is offered to

His unerring eye morning and evening by that penitent love which fixes its eye upon the Crucified; freedom from current prejudice and false human opinion, when the soul gazes by intuitive faith upon the actual truth; freedom from the depressing yoke of weak health or narrow circumstances, since the soul cannot be crushed which rests consciously upon the everlasting arms; freedom from that haunting fear of death, which holds those who think really upon death "all their lifetime subject to bondage," unless they are His true friends and clients, who by the sharpness of His own death has led the way, and "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." It is freedom in time, but also and beyond, freedom in eternity. In that blessed world, in the unclouded presence of the Emancipator, the brand of slavery is inconceivable. In that world there is indeed a perpetual service, yet, since it is the service of love made perfect, it is only and by necessity the service of the free.—*Ibid.*

#### IV. ITS ESSENTIAL OBLIGATIONS, REQUIREMENTS, AND CONDITIONS.

##### Duty, obedience, love.

[16213] How doth the Son of God make us free? Not *from* duty, but *for* duty. He that lieth under the dominion and power of any sin is a very slave. But then are we free indeed, when we are loosed, not from a due subjection to God, but from the power of the devil. It is not liberty to be free to do what we please, good or evil; but the more determined we are to good, the more freedom—for that is a liberty which comes nearest to the liberty of God, who is a most free agent and yet cannot sin. Such a liberty is in God, Christ, and the angels in heaven.—*T. Mantion, D.D.*

[16214] There are many grandly sweet contradictions, or rather apparent contradictions, in the Christian aspect of perfect freedom in the Divine service. For he who would be ever and entirely free can only become so through the yielding up of himself, body, soul, and spirit, a willing sacrifice to his Lord and Master, while it is alone he who cries, "Father, I dare not move one step without Thine aid," that secures to the full a real and noble independence. The glorious prerogative of liberty, in its truest, highest sense, may *not* be claimed except by him, who, with that word of triumph on his lips, bows in daily and hourly submission 'neath the yoke of Christ.—*A. M. A. W.*

[16215] The system of law reigns no less in the biological than in the physical kingdom. Hence there is no such thing for the creature as *absolute* freedom; though *perfect* freedom may be enjoyed. As a machine when mechanical principles are properly applied and its several arrangements are rightly adjusted, works easily and freely, effectively and perfect: so man, the most marvellous of all God's handiwork, enjoys a sense of perfect liberty as soon as and only as

long as his complicated being and especially his will readily moves in harmony with the Divine purposes.—*C. N.*

#### V. ITS PRESCRIPTIVE LIMITS.

##### 1 Christian liberty stands equally opposed to lawlessness and legality.

[16216] A Christian has not liberty for "a cloak of maliciousness" (1 Pet. ii. 16); but, as God's servant, he denies the false geniality and the false emancipation that will make for itself an exception to the validity of the law that binds all others, yea, that will continue in sin that grace may become the mightier, or may show itself the richer (Rom. vi. 1). But Christian liberty is equally opposed also to nomianism, which places man only in an external relation to the law, the mere commandment, the mere imperative, while it does not become for him "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. i. 26), and without his own heart becoming homogeneous to the law. The principle in the life of a Christian is the unity of the law with freedom of the will, or, what is the same thing, the unity of freedom with grace, with God's love. And the more the new love, the new obedience, the new pleasure is diffused from the centre over the whole circumference of life, from the heart into the other spiritual as well as bodily organs, the more also will the whole life-walk show itself a walk in *truth* and *righteousness*. Such a Christian cannot but speak the truth; for he himself is true; the truth has passed over into his being. He cannot but deal justly and honestly, for, as Master Eckart says, "Righteousness has overpowered him; he is laid hold of by righteousness, and is one with it."—*Bp. Martensen.*

[16217] There are two kinds of lawless people—those who are under the law, and those who are above the law. The one class are a very bad sort of people, and the other are the very best sort. A man who is under the law, and lawless, is thoroughly wicked. A man who is above the law, and lawless, because he has already incorporated into his own nature the tendencies which the law was set to produce, is nearly perfect. Relatively he is perfect. To be under the law is a condition which is destructive of liberty. It is rebellious, disorganizing, and so, pain-producing. To be above the law in a sense of more than obeying it—in the sense of super-obedience—is joy-producing, ennobling, perfecting. The liberty which comes from the flesh, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, is pronounced sensual or devilish; but there is a liberty which transcends that immeasurably in scope and privilege. This is Divine.—*H. W. Beecher.*

##### 2 Man, while necessarily submitting to material law, must become a law unto himself: law must be in him, though not on him.

[16218] What is freedom? If I were to put the question at large, most men would say per-



haps, "Well, it is the permission or power to do as you have a mind to do." That is it. That is true. It *is* doing as we have a mind to do. But doing as they have a mind to brings men into the most degrading bondage. How is that? The men who are always doing as they have a mind to, are men who are for ever knocking against difficulties, getting into trouble, coming under arrests for violations of law and public sentiment, and destroying the peace of their own minds. Says one, "You educate people not to do as they have a mind to, and yet you say that the idea of liberty is to do just that." I do. Our highest personal liberty consists in our doing as we have a mind to. "Does not the definition lack something of clearness, then?" It does. There is something left out, or not added. "And what is that?" Let us come to a better understanding of it by some reading of life—by some familiar illustrations. Consider how many laws there are which affect a man's body—the laws of light; the laws of heat; the laws of gravitation; the law of sleep; the law of food; the law of digestion with reference to food; the law of exercise; and scores innumerable of other laws. Those laws that touch the body are relative, in a certain degree, to each man; and yet they are generally alike. That which is violation of law in one man may not be so in another. Take the law of sleep. Men are so differently constituted that in the same act one man violates that law and another man does not. There are some men who must have eight hours' sleep in twenty-four, and there are others who do not need more than five or six hours' sleep in twenty-four. There is a relativity in these matters. There are some laws that touch men differently. And yet all men are subject to these laws. He that violates the law of his physical organs is at once pursued, arrested, convicted, condemned, and punished, by that nature of things which we call *the necessity of material law*. A man, in short, is treated as a prisoner and restrained of his liberty, if he does not obey natural laws in their various degrees, according to their relative importance. And, on the other hand, he that intelligently accepts, and heartily obeys known natural laws, has health, and good spirits and vital buoyancy, and joy, and a largeness of liberty. The man who is constantly rubbing and galling against the law is under the law; but the man who is cognisant of the requisitions of the law, and obeys them, is above the law, and is free. For, what is the law, as respects man, but that which God thought of when He meant to make the most of a man under his circumstances?—*Ibid*.

[16219] The way to become that which God had in His mind in making us is, to follow His laws. By following them it is that we come to the fullness of ourselves. The way toward largeness is not to rebel against law, but to follow the indications of it. He who has accepted law—who has conformed his life to it—who has made it, in some sense, a part of his

own will, does just as he has a mind to, because he has a mind to do just as he ought to. A man who is ignorant of eating or drinking has a mind to eat and drink everything that is put before him; and he has time to repent of it afterwards. But when a man is thoroughly instructed in regard to eating and drinking, and is familiar with the laws of health, and has learned to conform to them, he sits down to a bountiful table, and he also eats as he has a mind to; but he has a mind to eat only things that are good for him. In both cases men do as they like; but in one case it leads into trouble; and in the other case it lifts above all trouble. Obedience to natural law is liberty; and it is the only liberty that a man has in this world.—*Ibid*.

[16220] What is it to be a law unto yourself? Simply to have embodied in yourself God's laws. You are not a law unto yourself until you do what the law requires better by automatic action than by voluntary effort. Your body takes care of itself, and your mind is engaged with business matters, at the same time. Your body is going through a series of compound gymnastics, and at the same time your mind is involved in a complicated, intellectual process. And each operation is carried on independent of the other, and unconsciously. Therefore in these respects you are a law unto yourself. As soon as a man has learned what the will of God is in respect to law, he forgets it. That is to say, he has put the law in himself, so that it is registered there, and set to perform its own work.—*Ibid*.

[16221] Man has risen superior to the law of truth, and the law of honesty, by exacting from himself perfect obedience to them. It took him a good while to do it, but now that he has done it, he dwells perpetually in that superior realm. . . . In coming to obedience to any law, first we perceive the desirableness or necessity of it; then we determine that we will obey it; then, by drill and practice, we are enabled to obey so perfectly that we do it unconsciously. And when we come to this point, the law has passed into our being. It is a law which we have overtaken on the road, and passed before, so that it is behind us, and we are in a state of liberty.—*Ibid*.

3 Liberty as regards opinion or individual free thought must be curtailed when it assumes any other form than that of absolute deference to the positive revelations of Scripture.

*While free examination of the truth is courted, submission to its Divine revelations involves a certain limitation of intellectual licence.*

[16222] The gospel, at the very onset, must consecrate, and recognize the absolute freedom of choice, which, in the region of the intellect, is called free examination, otherwise we cannot speak of free thought in Christianity. But it is not allowed to abide by the first condition, for

in this domain, as in others, the choice may be evil, that is to say, I may choose a doctrine of bondage. It is to no purpose that I have embraced it voluntarily; it is not one whit the less slavery. The good choice must follow a free choice, and the good choice for us is to appropriate a doctrine of liberty, one that shall be the real emancipation of thought. This doctrine can be no other than the truth, for the truth alone allows to the intellect its free development. That is why Jesus not only says—"You shall be free, inasmuch as no pressure shall weigh upon you," but more—"The truth shall make you free." We see that the whole contest between Christians and their opponents bears upon what the first define and the second confound, upon what freethinkers deem to lie only in a free choice, while Christians deem it to lie in a good choice freely made. Christianity, according to us, is the emancipation of thought, because it realizes the two conditions of all true liberty—it leads us to think freely of the truth, that is to say, liberty in a superior sense.—*Rev. E. Pressensé, D.D.*

[16223] We are sometimes told: Your religion is good for the poor, the ignorant, and children! That's true; but in our eyes it is a title of glory. She has rendered investigation possible to all. Let a child grow in human knowledge it will become a Newton or a Pascal; he will attain the scientific confirmation of his first intentions, but it remains not a whit the less that the foundation of his faith will always be the first encounter with the truth, the decisive experience of her conformity with his innermost needs, the thoroughly moral examination, in which the heart, the will, and the conscience have played the principal part. Let them cease then from accusing us Christians of wishing to curb investigation; we wish it to be broader and more general than the freest of thinkers do; we invite all men, and I add the whole of man: his mind, heart, will, conscience. Our conviction rests upon a thorough and personal proof of the truth, upon a personal and living contact, and we say to all authorities what the men of Sychem said to the woman of Samaria, "We believe, not because you have told us, but because we have seen the Messiah, the Saviour Himself!" Can you say the same of your negation, O you who claim to represent exclusively free thought? Are there not many who deny by hearsay, without personal examination, and who have accepted the *encycliques* for unbelief, as others accept those of the hierarchy? Those who have examined, are they not satisfied with an observance purely rational or external, while they neglect the noble means for a superior and moral acquaintance? While we can say, "We believe because we have seen," may it not be said of these—they doubt and deny, because they have not seen? Ye men of free examination, you have not sufficiently examined. By what right do you regard us as unfaithful to free thought? They only are false to it who have not used it.—*Ibid.*

[16224] It has been objected that "to wear the livery of a Church, to accept the championship of a creed, . . . is incompatible with liberty. They imply adhesion to that which in the world of thought is its energetic antagonist; they commit you to the principle of dogma." . . . When in the imperishable creeds of Christendom, essential dogmatic truth, like the lightning flash playing around the mountain-peak, discovers for a moment to some enthusiastic experimentalist the existence of a higher world than that in which he so meritoriously pursues his observations, he is sometimes rather irritated than delighted and cheered by the discovery. Because dogmatic Christianity is a positive protest against the theory which sees no value in any save experimental methods of inquiry, the experimentalist will not unfrequently join with the Hegelian in denouncing dogma as the enemy of liberty.—*Canon Liddon.*

[16225] It is asked, Is not dogma a restraint upon thought? Unquestionably. But the question implies a notion of liberty which is impossible. Surely a being is free when he moves without difficulty in the sphere which is assigned to him by his natural constitution. If he can only travel beyond his sphere with the certainty of destroying himself, it is not an unreasonable tax upon his liberty, whereby he is confined within the barrier that secures his safety. Now truth is originally the native element of human thought; and Christian dogma prescribes the direction and limits of truth concerning God and His relations to man.—*Ibid.*

[16226] A literally complete independence is denied even to man's thought, since thought too, in its beautiful freedom, is a creature of God. To own allegiance to none is a prerogative of Deity. We cannot conceive God as dispensing with the dependence of any form of created life upon Himself, the source of life, since this were to violate the primal law of His Being. And in that highest of all subjects, God's revelation of Himself to created intelligence, the presumptuous self-assertion of the individual thinker, in dealing with His message, can only be deemed a dream of folly. The positive revelations of Scripture and the doctrines of the Church's primitive creed claim to be God's truth; they are this, or they are falsehoods. That they are what they claim to be is a matter of detailed proof; but I am now contending against the method of discrediting them beforehand by denouncing their dogmatic form. Surely we inflict upon ourselves no grave dishonour by bending before the thought of God; surely we move with sufficient freedom, if in our freedom we move along the line of orthodoxy. It is the line which the Eternal Reason has constructed to span the chasms and to pierce the obstructions of thought. It is the line from which we cannot deviate, if we advance at all, without courting that ruin of all convictions which is the penalty of a too presumptuous hardihood.—*Ibid.*

[16227] To believe the dogma that God exists is inconsistent with a liberty to deny His existence. But such liberty is, in the judgment of faith, parallel to that of denying the existence of the sun or of the atmosphere. To complain of the creed as an interference with liberty, is to imitate the savage who had to walk across London at night, and who remarked that the lamp-posts were an obstruction to traffic. Speaking of the liberty of the press, in his work on American Democracy, De Tocqueville expresses his longing for an intermediate position between an entire absence of restraint and an absolute control of the organs of opinion, as that which would be best fitted to the real interests of the people. We Englishmen, almost alone among the nations of the earth, have the happiness to realize in our political life the aspiration of the historian. We understand the doctrine of the supremacy of the law, and we enjoy the fullest personal freedom. In the Church of Christ there is a similar alliance between freedom and authority. This alliance may be disturbed by sections of Christendom or by single theologians, who endeavour to enforce an intellectual absolutism in matters which are fairly matters of opinion. Or it may be destroyed by a rationalism which creates spiritual anarchy, only to lay the foundations of a dogmatism differing from that of the Church in its entire lack of any respectable authority. But "where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The voice of the Spirit in the soul corresponds to the voice of the Spirit in Scripture and in the Universal Church.—*Ibid.*

[16228] Hooker warned the English Church that the Athanasian Creed had still a work to do, in ages far removed from the Arian epoch; and certainly this creed has been a standing offence to latitudinarianism from the days of Tillotson to our own. Yet so unprejudiced a witness as the late Bishop of Calcutta (Dr. Cotton, Charge, 1863) has told us that there are forms of Indian thought which no other instrument so adequately confronts. This very creed enables him most authoritatively and effectively to advance the missionary work of his Master. Again, what composition can in reality be more dogmatic than the *Te Deum*? It brings before the soul the truths of the Blessed Trinity and of the Incarnation with close theological precision. Yet, as we use it, it stimulates unbounded spiritual movement. The soul ranges over earth and heaven, plunges into the depths of its own deepest consciousness, mounts to the very heart of God. The soul moves so freely, because it moves between fixed certainties. It finds that the sublime truths which it adores do not for one moment fetter the freedom of its movement. No Christian who seriously believes the doctrines that Jesus is God, that the death of Jesus is a world-redeeming sacrifice, that the Eternal Spirit sanctifies the redeemed, that Scripture is the inspired word of God, that the sacraments are appointed channels whereby we

partake of the life of Jesus, can say that in himself these truths have petrified, or arrested, or stifled thought.—*Ibid.*

## PERFECT PEACE.

### I. NATURE OF CHRISTIAN PEACE.

[16229] The peace with God enjoyed by all true believers is twofold. There is a—(1) *Legal*, judicial peace, which concerns the believer's standing, the blessed result of a justified state, pertaining to the conscience. (2) A peace, which concerns the believer's fellowship, the gracious consequence of our sanctification, given through faith, realized in the heart.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes.*

[16230] It is unclouded azure in a lake of glass; it is the soul which Christ has pacified, spread out in serenity and simple faith, and the Lord God, merciful and gracious, smiling over it.—*Hamilton.*

[16231] The corner will never be found in this world, where care and evil shall be unknown by human beings. But the peace which the Saviour gives His own is peace of heart and mind amid daily duties. It is that "central peace" which may "subsist at the heart of endless agitation."—*Boyd.*

[16232] Peace is a fair virgin, every one's love, the praise of all tongues, the object of all eyes, the wish of all hearts. She hath a smiling look, which never frowneth with the least scowl of anger; snowy arms, soft as down, and whiter than the swan's feathers, always open to pious embracements. Her white hand carries an olive branch, the symbol and emblem of quietness. She hath the face of a glorious angel, always looking towards righteousness, as the two cherubim looked one upon the other, and both unto the mercy-seat. Her court is the invincible fort of integrity; so guarded by the Divine providence, that drums, trumpets, and thundering cannons, those loud instruments of war (I mean blasphemy, contention, violence), may affront her, but never fright her. She hath a bounteous hand, virtual like the garment of Christ; if a faithful soul can come to touch it, to kiss it, all her vexations are fled, her conscience is at rest. Her bowels are full of pity; she is always composing salves for all wounds of a broken heart. Sedition and tumult her very soul hates; she tramples injuries and discords under her triumphant feet; she sits in a throne of joy, and wears a crown of eternity; and to all those that open the door of their heart to bid her welcome, she will open the door of heaven to bid them welcome, and repose their souls in everlasting peace.—*T. Adams.*

### II. ITS SOURCE AND FOUNDATION.

[16233] "The peace of God" comes as the gift and blessing of "the God of peace." It is



the free gift of the Father, the purchase of the Son, the fruit of the Spirit.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes.*

[16234] Mere happiness  
Is of ourselves, but blessedness of God.—*Anon.*

[16235] The ground and foundation of peace is—(1) What is done for us by Christ Himself. The peace which the Lord Jesus purchased and procured, when “the chastisement of our peace was laid upon Him,” and full reconciliation was effected by the blood of His cross, Col. i. 20; the peace which He bequeathed as His rich legacy, John xiv. 27; which He announced as a Prophet, John xvi. 33; purchased as a Priest, Col. i. 20; dispenses as a King, Isa. ix. 6. (2) What is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit in the application of the work of Christ, and the renewing of our nature, and the sealing of our hearts, Gal. v. 22; Rom. xv. 13. (3) What is made sure to us in the everlasting covenant, Isa. liv. 10-13; and in sweet promises, Isa. xxvi. 3, xxxii. 18; Philip. iv. 7. Thus every true believer in Christ has peace *in pretio*, he has the price of its purchase, the blood of Christ in his hand; *in promisso*, in the promise and covenant of God; *in semine*, in the seed in his heart, Ps. xcvi. 11.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes.*

[16236] The humble man, though surrounded with the scorn and reproach of the world, is still in peace, for the stability of his peace resteth not upon the world, but upon God.—*Thomas à Kempis.*

### III. ITS SUPREME BLESSEDNESS.

[16237] It is a great mercy to enjoy the gospel of peace, but a greater to enjoy the peace of the gospel.—*Dyer.*

[16238] The heart is no longer like a surging sea, but like a peaceful lake in which the sun reflects itself. Cancerous care has been forced to depart.—*Krummacher.*

[16239] This peace is not merely a great consolation, the best that the soul can crave this side of heaven, but it is a mighty element of conservative force in the soul. “It shall,” says the apostle, “keep your heart and mind,” &c. Its power in this respect is the same as is nearly synonymously expressed by the prophet who says, that “the joy of the Lord is your strength.” There is great power in joy, but a steadier strength in peace—power or strength for practical work or struggle. Distrust or agitation never helps a difficult undertaking, but often defeats it—sometimes renders it absolutely impracticable. You could not walk from one side of the street to the other on a plank a foot wide, were it elevated a hundred feet in the air; but you could readily enough pass over it were it on the ground. Why the difference? In the latter case you have confidence, self-possession; in the other you have not, and life or death hangs on the difference. Thus the peace of God “shall keep your heart and mind” by saving

you from fear, from distrust, from agitation. Giving you quietness and assurance, it shall become a source of real and invincible force within you.—*Anon.*

[16240] What can I fear? Will it be death? But you know that Christ is my life, and that I shall gain by death. Will it be exile? But the earth and all its fullness are the Lord's. Will it be the loss of wealth? But we brought nothing into the world, and can carry nothing out. Thus all the terrors of the world are contemptible in my eyes, and I smile at all its good things. Poverty I do not fear; riches I do not sigh for; death I do not shrink from; and life I do not desire.—*Chrysostom.*

[16241] How mournfully we write it or speak it at times! “We have nothing left but God!” As though that were the extreme of destitution, just one spark of hope to save from despair, one faint star only, glimmering through the deep, black night. Nothing left but infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite love! Why, having this, we have all the blessedness and wealth of heaven, the full joy of immortals, the glory and peace of the redeemed in the mansions of light.—*Spurgeon.*

[16242] O peacefulness! angel of tranquillity, with the gentle smile of heaven! happy the man over whom thou holdest thy palm-branch in defence, so that he finds peace around and within him, and quietly performs his daily work! happy the people in whom thy gentle spirit prevails! happy the house which thou hast chosen for an abode in which the dwellers, returning from the struggle of life, recover their lost quiet.—*De Wette.*

[16243] You have seen the sea when it was perfectly smooth, with hardly a ripple on the water; and you have watched it when lashed into fury by the tempest, the waves run mountains high. But all this fury of the elements is only on the surface; below that raging surface of wave and foam and howling winds are depths which no storms ever reach, where the many-branched coral and other strange forms of growth and life spread over vast submarine plains and valleys, throughout the whole extent of which reigns the silence and the stillness of an unbroken calm. Such is the contrast between the outward trials of life and the deep inward calm which reigns in the heart which is stayed on God. We cannot escape the trials of life, but if there be within us true trust in God, then will there be depths in our inmost being where no storms can reach, depths beyond the reach of the waves of this troublesome world, where the fury of the tempest cannot come, where all will be calm and still: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”—*J. B. Mozley, D.D.*

[16244] In a state of peace the soul lives as in a watered garden, where, under the watchful

eye of the Divine Source, the plant grows and strengthens. All religious habits and duties—prayer, charity, and mercy—are formed and matured when the man is in a state of peace with others—with all men; when he is not agitated by small selfish excitements and interests which divert him from himself and his own path of duty, but can think of himself, what he ought to do, and where he is going. He can then live seriously, calmly, and wisely; but there is an end to all religious progress when a man's whole mind is taken up in the morbid excitement of small enmities, when he derives gratification from these jarring relations to others. He ceases to reflect upon himself and to work out his own salvation; his thoughts and his cares are frittered away upon trifles. He does not follow peace, and therefore he does not follow holiness. Let him change all this, throw off these humiliating chains, and set himself once and for all free for serving God, watching his own heart, doing good to his neighbour, and raising his own soul.—*Ibid.*

#### IV. ITS CONNECTION WITH JOY.

Joy is always the attendant of God's peace.

##### (1) *Source of Christian joy.*

a. Belief in the unseen Christ, creating harmony in the soul (1 Pet. i. 8).

[16245] It is manifest that while there is an inward discord, joy is rendered impossible. Happiness in transient flashes there may be; but if the heart be at war with itself, blessedness is destroyed. And in all men there is that war, more or less intensely, until they believe. They have two masters—each on his throne—flesh and spirit; or, conscience and passion. The voice of the one is, "Enjoy, again and again, and yet again;" but as it dies out, mark the low moan of the other, rising like a troubled sea from the depths of the heart, "For all that I condemn thee, and thou art doomed." Now the self-surrender of belief at once destroys this war. But observe, it is emphatically a belief in a Christ whom the eye cannot see that produces this repose. In saying, "Whom having not seen ye love," Peter has taken away the apparent advantage of being with Christ in old Jerusalem: he had seen Him there, and had only distrusted and denied Him. The force of that "not seen" seems to be this: If there were a visible Christ, we could not realize His perfect sympathy with, and insight of, all that is deepest and most secret in our own souls. It is this feeling of Christ's perfect knowledge, this sense of His eye looking into and through us, which makes His atonement so gloriously accessible to faith. With this consciousness we feel that He who died on Calvary knows us, in all our sins, and cares, and sorrows; and in this belief the whole soul is surrendered to Him. Then the dim, low peal of past sin dies away—then conscience regains its throne—then the spiritual nature begins to reign over the impulses of the flesh. Having yielded his heart utterly to Christ, man is at one

with himself, and in this harmony begins the joy which springs from the inner soul. Thus, out of the sacrifice of belief springs the true blessedness of man.—*Rev. E. L. Hull.*

b. Belief in the unseen Christ, filling the heart with deepest love.

[16246] Man's soul is not only discordant, but vacant. It cries out for emotion. The fullness of emotion is its life. Now that vacancy is the death of joy, and it sends men on that perpetual chase after happiness which we see so much of in the world. Hence the life-cry of most men is, "Give, give;" for the human soul, unsatisfied with the world, unsatisfied had it the possession of the starry universe, yearns for that fullness of emotion which is given only by the love of God. Hence it is that you so often find the young heart, while yet undegraded in its first fresh feelings, willing and even wishing to die in its youth. For what means that sentimentalism which so many young souls feel—viz.: "That to die young is youth's divinest gift" but this—that they are becoming conscious of that hollowness and vacancy in the heart which no mere human emotion can fill. Or to see this in its crisis, look at the unbeliever. The man who has lost his early faith in Christianity will often tell you in unutterable sadness, "I have looked upwards, and backwards, and beyond, and I find nothing in life but the shadow of that vanity and vexation which fill my own soul." For there is no sorrow so intense as that which enters a man when he is tempted to believe that there is no Christ. The hollowness of the heart is awfully realized then. But belief in the unseen Christ gives this fullness of emotion. It is emphatically the Christ we cannot see who fills us with the deepest love. Just because He is unseen, we can realize Him as near us in every care and doubt and difficulty; and that perpetual sympathy rouses the profoundest emotion of man. It is this feeling of a love in Christ—high as heaven—deep as man's sinful unbelief—broad as eternity; and it is the perception of that love in all its grandeur, caring for us in every personal sorrow, sympathizing with us in every individual experience, which fills the heart's vacancy, and at once creates joy.—*Ibid.*

[16247] The joy which springs from the fount of love becomes deeper, because the sense of eternity pervades it all. The Christian's heaven is not *only* a thing to be hoped for. That is not true to the facts of spiritual life. The soul that feels the love of Christ grasps eternity now—has within it now an earnest of the conquest of the grave; and in feeling "I shall be for ever with the Lord," realizes heaven in the present. Thus, in belief is that joy—real, deep, present—which fills with its tide all the emotions of the soul. Hence we see how greatly those err who imagine that the cross, and the hardships, and the sacrifice of Christian life are opposed to joy.—*Ibid.*

(2) *Nature of Christian joy.*

a. It is inexpressible from the depth of its emotion.

[16248] It is not the joy of shouts, and excitements, and manifest exultation. It is not a loud "Glory be to God," groaned at the end of a prayer. It is too calm in its depths for language to utter it. And this character is perhaps best shown in the fact that this joy deepens in the midst of sorrow, for if I am surrendered to Christ, every sorrow He sends is a working out of His will, and in that I can rejoice; and if I have known His love, I know that it abides amid all suffering, and in that conviction suffering loses its terror and becomes even blessed. This joy in sorrow was seen in the men to whom the apostle wrote; for while persecution was lighting her beacon-fires, and the approach of danger summoned them like a trumpet-call to stand ready for their faith to die, their joy grew calmer amid "the heaviness of those manifold temptations." This joy in the midst of sorrow was seen in the martyr ages; amidst the darkening storm of persecution the martyr-souls were lighted like peaceful homes with the joy of Christ. Outcasts in strange cities, prisoned in deepest dungeons, *they* would not have exchanged their joy for the palace of the Emperor or the crowns of the world. A celestial calm was in those men which made them forget their torments. The Sabbath of eternity with its music descended into their spirits amid the baptism of fire. What mattered it to them when death found them, or how it came—whether under the flashing axe of the headsmen, or the roaring of the lion? They felt the embrace of an immortal tenderness which filled them with joy before the mortal agony had ceased its pangs of pain. And do we know nothing of this now? Have we not felt the glory of grief? Have we not known the joy of Christ resting like a sleeping light upon the soul, amid all the storm-blasts of trouble, and thus proved what Peter meant by calling that joy an unspeakable thing?—*Ibid.*

b. It is the earnest of the future heaven.

[16249] Some men seem to fancy that they shall gain joy by entering heaven. But joy, as we have seen, is not gained or lost by any change of state; it belongs to the immortal soul. You cannot get into heaven; heaven must enter you. You must carry heaven with you in the joy of Christ, or you will find no heaven beyond the grave. But some one may ask, "Is this feeble rejoicing of the Christian on earth the real element of the eternal heaven?" Your present joy will then lose its imperfections; your present sacrifice will then be shorn of its painfulness; that which is perfect will have come, and that which is partial will be done away. Then the love "which hopeth all things, endureth all things," will be the light that shall not fail when the lamps of faith and hope are lost in a blaze of glory. Then we shall cease our life of struggle, of endeavour, of unrest, and be filled with the eternal love, which is the eternal joy.

But some one may ask again, "Is it not impossible to maintain this rejoicing amid the distractions of earthly business and earthly care? That rejoicing is not the loud shout of excitement, but the calm peace of God deepening within the soul amid all its outward changes, and this you may maintain. And if you will keep it, be prepared to obey Christ's law, and sacrifice all that lessens its energy.—*Ibid.*"

## V. ITS ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS.

[16250] It is—(1) Real peace; not the delusive calm of a hollow truce, nor the deceitful tranquillity of stolid indifference and thoughtless apathy. An ice-bound river is at peace; a motionless corpse. In true peace there is life and activity as well as rest. (2) Great peace (Psa. cxix. 165; Isa. liv. 13); the peace which is great in its foundation, its author, its effects. (3) Abundant peace (Jer. xxxiii. 6); flowing in many channels, and filling the heart "with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. xv. 13). (4) Abiding; secure and certain, a peace that lives independently of circumstances; "which the world can neither give nor take away," the unruffled undercurrent, beneath the ground swell of the Christian's griefs and sorrows; a peace not often disturbed and never finally overthrown. (5) Incomprehensible (Philip. iv. 7); not only to the men of this world, but to the saints of God themselves.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes.*

## VI. PEACE AS THE DISTINGUISHING MARK OF THE IDEAL LIFE.

## I The lost ideal of the life of peace.

"O that thou hadst hearkened unto My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river" (Isa. xlvi. 18).

[16251] The ideal life is *the* life; the others that come in the place of them are usurpers and pretenders merely, with more or less resemblance to the reality. But it is strange, and to some it may very well be alarming, to think of the difference between themselves as they have made themselves and themselves as God would have had them. Take it this way. There is a place unseen and far away, and there are two paths to that place. One is a mountain path; you see it, you see it all the way, all along the sides of the hills; it has a southern aspect; it catches the sun; it commands fine prospects; there are milestones, there are houses of rest, full protection, pleasant company all the way. There is another path, if you like to call it so: it goes into the valleys and through the woods, where there are perplexing cross-ways, and into thorny brakes that tear the flesh, and across bogs where you have to lay down thick branches of great trees that you may not sink, and over as you can the unbridged river and rapid stream, and up the steep and jagged rock. Now, those two paths symbolize to some men—indeed, they do more or less to all men—the life we might



have led, and the life we have led. And it might not have been a very unprofitable exercise for any one to spend an hour some night in trying to discover and make out this, his own ideal and proper life. Let him say, "What I might have, what I ought to have been!"—*Rev. Dr. Raleigh.*

[16252] We are not left altogether without guidance for an inquiry into what we might have been, because there is a natural outline in every man's life. If you have ever been at St. Andrew's, and have looked at the ruins of that great cathedral, you have seen not only the massive walls that are left in a small part of it, but you have seen just the appearance above ground, the whole shape of the cathedral—nothing more than that: you can just form an idea of what it would be if it stood there in all its grandeur. Well, there is left in every man something of this kind. Sin depraves, but it does not obliterate the organic powers and the natural peculiarities and tendencies of the individual. What I might have been—that is not a picture which has altogether vanished in the air; there is some outline of it left, an outline in each man. Of course these differ very much among themselves, just as pictures differ in a gallery or as human faces in a crowded street, all of which, perhaps, you will find to have a general resemblance, but none of which are exactly alike. But the question is about my own ideal: what kind of a person should I have been if I had lived according to God's commandments, according to the great gospel possibilities from the first? What is it I have been missing all these years—getting a glimpse of it now and again? Just as we get a glimpse of the sun on a wintry morning, so I have had now and then, in a supreme moment, a glimpse of what I might have been; and then, strangely enough, instead of realizing that, I went and took, not perhaps the lowest, but some lower way of things. Could I now recover that image, could I paint myself as I ought to be, not merely by drawing the lines of a general perfection by the aid of the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, Christian morality and the life of Christ; not merely that, but to recover my true self, the peculiarity, the idiosyncrasy, the distinction of my perfection, it were at any rate worth while to try. For this is not a word of mere imagination; it concerns every man in the substance of it most intimately, for this is indeed himself; this thing which never has been is the thing which must be in a large measure still; this lost self is the self that must be found, else happiness cannot be found.—*Ibid.*

## 2 The restored ideal of the life of peace.

[16253] Is your life like a river? Why, you would say in a moment, "I should liken it, perhaps, to a mountain rill, sometimes oozing out of moss, and, alas! discovered by it. I might liken it to a little muddy brook of which no one would drink unless he was very, very thirsty; or,

for a little while, in some happy moments of my life, to a stream, soon becoming shallower, until it is all drunk up again into the air and down into the sand." I am speaking of natural goodness, and I am very sure that there is no man's conscience that will contest this point if the conscience is awake. I am speaking of the natural and attainable goodness, of all that man can do and be without the special help of God. . . . Is there any possibility of recovering this lost ideal, and turning the Divine lamentation into Divine song and rejoicing? "We who believe," says one who knew full well, "are His workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." "It is God that worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure." We are God's husbandmen. He breaks up this evil fallow-ground of our old nature, changes our heart into the good soil, sows the quick seed of truth and life, and watches and waters and suns all to the harvest. We are God's building, edified towards completeness with His own hand, filled with His own indwelling Spirit. Aye, and He which hath begun the good work in us will confirm it unto the day of Jesus Christ. Except a man be born again in this way—it may not be suddenly as to his own conscience, it may be insensibly from Christian nurture—unless he be born in this sense, he cannot see the kingdom of God.—*Ibid.*

[16254] The might have been has not been realized; the precious possibility has gone behind and down into the mould and dust of dead leaves and all perishing things, and you imagine that it can have no recovery, no resurrection, for ever. Say not so. . . . Christ is putting before us the great gospel of good news with Divine strength in it, with Divine quickening power to wake men anew in it. He is telling us that it is not merely a gospel of forgiveness and restitution of state, but it is a gospel of regeneracy, and great endeavour, and holy longing, and immortal strength; that it is a gospel that calls for living men, and makes them living, that calls for perfect men, and begins to make them perfect. Lest we should perplex ourselves by asking too many questions about its nature and the relation of its parts to each other and to us, about this doctrine and that doctrine, and about the method of receiving the gospel through what we call faith, or about the way of getting it again and finding its pleasant ways after we had lost it, He says to us—I believe He says to all of us alike—"Go ye forth of Babylon, flee from the Chaldeans." That means when interpreted, just begin where you are; do the nearest thing, the thing that lies readiest to hand; forsake the sin that is strongest, rectify the wrong that is nearest, do the duty that comes closest to your hand; escape from the snares that you know to be most entangling; take the path that is open; make room in your heart for all that God will give you, and especially for the renewing spirit.

And in all this look unto Jesus, and press towards Him as you look, and you are a new creature in Him; the ruin is restored, Eden blooms once more, the dead is alive again, the long-lost self is found.—*Ibid.*

## VII. THE PERPETUAL STRUGGLE OF THE EARNEST SOUL AFTER PEACE.

### Steps of progress.

#### (1) *The ruining of human pride.*

[16255] One source of human restlessness—one reason, at least, why men pass through this world chafing, fretful, and dissatisfied with their lot in life, is just this, that they have formed an overweening estimate of self, and they find that neither God nor man treats them as they think that they deserve. It is the adoration of self that makes men miserable. It is that strange greediness of praise which gives contempt its power to wound us. For, only let it be known that one man has sneered, it matters not that the world is deafening him with its admiration, that sneer will shoot a pang of wretchedness through the hour of his proudest triumph. Now the first thing the gospel does is to crush that spirit of self-esteem. At the foot of the cross there is no room for pride. The cross read out this lesson to the world; merit is impossible before God. We are not claimants for reward, we are but suppliants for life—a life which has been forfeited by guilt.—*Rev. F. Robertson.*

[16256] When first the humility of the gospel takes possession of our souls it is the dawn of a morning which goes before an everlasting day of calmness and serenity.—*Ibid.*

#### (2) *The attainment of a spirit of reconciliation.*

[16257] If there were nothing else to make men wretched, uncertainty respecting their future destinies would be enough. We are going down into eternity, and its waves are rising to engulf us, every day nearer and darker; and if we have only a "perhaps" to meet it, and all beyond the moment of engulfment is utter and confused uncertainty, and a most vague ignorance whether the God whom we are to meet for the first time be satisfied or not, I say not that there is not steel and manhood enough in the heart of man to meet that calmly: there is—hundreds are doing it every hour, timid women and resolute men, quietly watching their own decay and fronting death unflinchingly—but I say this, that there is no *peace*, there is no *rest*, in the prospect of eternity, unless there is something very much more than a guess that God is loving us. It is one thing to meet death intrepidly, and it is altogether another to meet it peacefully and trustfully.—*Ibid.*

[16258] There are two classes of persons who are privileged to feel reconciliation with God; but the character of their peace is somewhat different. Peace is enjoyed by those who have

been in covenant with God, as it were, during all their lifetime; and peace is attainable by those who have only received His forgiveness late. There is a difference distinctly asserted in the words, "Peace to him that is afar off," and "Peace to him that is near." . . . There is a purity and innocence of heart, a simplicity, an ignorance of evil, which men who have got their minds enlarged by eating of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" look down upon with a contemptuous pity. But it is God's best peace, enjoyed by them that are "near." Serenity and pure-heartedness are the kind of peace that has most of heaven. It is better than religious *rapture*. The rapture that comes from pardoned guilt is like the fire-rocket that streams and blazes through the black sky, making everything brilliant for a moment, and forcing men to look at it: the peace of him that has lived near to God is like the quiet, steady lustre of the lighthouse lamp, startling no one, very easily mistaken for a common light, but never quenched, ever to be found when wanted casting the same mild ray through the long night across the maddest billows that curl their crests around the rock on which it stands. That is the kind of peace enjoyed by him that is near.—*Ibid.*

[16259] We must be conscious of a real, not a fictitious, harmony between ourselves and God. We cannot stay our whole being on Him by such a faith as this, unless we know and trust and love Him. The sense of reconciliation through Christ, of pardon, of acceptance, must be strong and abiding. It must be that very sense which draws us to rest and stay ourselves on Him, so that this becomes—not at once, but gradually, perhaps only after years of love and service, perhaps after only a few months of sincere devotion (for spiritual progress cannot be reckoned by earthly calendars)—the settled, abiding condition of our souls, and thus they are in their true normal condition set on God. I do not say there are no fluctuations. I fear there always will be times of deadness and coldness, when the faith varies and the consciousness of that resting-place is obscured, and seasons of infirmity, and also of transgression and sin, when it seems that a very severance is threatened between the soul and Christ. But still, in the main, for the most part, this steady purpose characterizes the life, and, in spite of all, the will is true, the heart sincere, the faith single in its aim, the "mind is stayed on" God; the needle, however the compass be moved, floats steadily, unerringly to the north. In that state we cast all this sinful, weak, sorrowful self on Him. He becomes everything to us; every thought rises from Him; every hope leads up to Him. To feel deeply is to pray fervently; each sorrow impels us to cast a fresh care on Him; our strength is but the manifestation of His; our very weakness is but the occasion for His strength being made perfect in us.—*Rev. F. Blunt, D.D.*

(3) *The attainment of a spirit of active obedience.*

[16260] It is not the dread of hell that makes men miserable. That is only a part of human restlessness. There is an eternal law that man cannot be happy except in keeping God's commandments. Make a man sure of heaven, and leave him with a soul not reduced to harmony, not humble, not pure, not obedient, he is a wretch still. There is a corroding, maddening sensation which comes from the feeling of uselessness; there is something that almost amounts to torture in the start with which we sometimes awake to the conviction that life is gliding away and nothing done; there is an uneasy, gnawing, self-reproach that comes from duties left unfulfilled. What is misery? It is the boundless law of duty written on the heart, and the accumulated self-reproach of not obeying it. Do we want the picture of a restless heart? Infinite duty, infinite transgression, infinite woe—that is the restlessness of man. God's remedy for this is to write His law by the Spirit upon the heart, so that we love Christ, and then we love what Christ commands. It has been well remarked, it is not said that *after* keeping God's commandments, but *in* keeping them, there is great reward. God has linked these two things together, and no man can separate them—obedience and peace. And it seems to be for this reason that when the early years of life have been spent in those professions which demand implicit obedience, the religion of riper years so often puts on a character of peculiar brightness. The religious soldier and the religious sailor are generally happy Christians for this reason, it may be, among others, that they have transferred to God's service the habit of unquestioning, prompt, ready obedience. For them there is no speculating about difficulties; there is none of that discursing into the whole world of motives which so often, in men trained to think rather than to act, disconcerts and saddens the whole life. Theirs is a life of action, and what is peace but this: "If a man love Me he will keep My commandments," and "I will manifest Myself to him"?—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

[16261] There are two things that a man has to look at in this world: one is, God seen through the cross of Christ; there is no mistake what God means by that, He means that He is reconciled. The other is the duty that lies immediately before him; let him bend himself anxiously and earnestly to that. But as he values peace let him not look at *self*. It is not well to be too anxious about the certainty of pardon. Pardon would not make you happy. God's law written on the heart makes you happy. There is no argument in all the world by which doubts can be made to pass away except this—action. There is no hope of rest for an infinite soul except in this—earnest obedience.—*Ibid.*

[16262] The great lesson for men to learn is that their happiness is within their own choice;

that it is to be wrought out by their own fidelity to God and conscience.—*Channing.*

VIII. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF ITS ENJOYMENT WHERE CONSCIENCE IS UN-APPEASED.

[16263] We say, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. How can there be peace when the soul is not at peace with its Maker, on whom it depends? And when the soul is not at peace with God, it cannot be at peace with itself. When conscience, as the regulator, has lost its control, all the other principles of the human mind are in disorder, and are moving with great, but also with appalling rapidity, and each in succession disturbing the soul, and all adding to the tumult. Instead of love, peace, and trust there will be instincts, lusts, and passions, under no restraint except that which is laid upon them by their jostling against one another.—*Anon.*

[16264] When the winds of heaven cease, the waves of the ocean gradually rock themselves to rest; and when the conscience, acting on behalf of God, ceases to lash the soul, there is a preparation made for all the thoughts and feelings gradually composing themselves into calmness and repose.—*Ibid.*

IX. REASONS FOR MAN'S NATURAL LACK OF PEACE.

1 The soul's innate restlessness.

(1) *Arising partly from the soul's own majesty.*

[16265] God made the spirit of man like the ocean in its vastness. Ten miles deep the Atlantic depths go down where human plummet never sounded, and the billows that roll their wild tumult above have ten miles of water beneath to heave them up. A pond may be without a ripple; as to the troubled sea, just because it is vast, it cannot rest. And so is it with the soul of man. It is its own magnificence that makes it intensely miserable. Rest! Why man's soul rocks and billows itself with an eternity beneath it. It is that which makes human suffering a thing of grandeur, because every pang that contracts a human brow, and every quiver that distorts a pale lip, are only indications of what may merge into the unresting doom of infinite wail. When God put man in possession of a self, and made that self immortal, He made him master of a tremendous heritage of woe.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

(2) *Arising partly from the power of simultaneous action on the soul by heavenly and earthly influences.*

[16266] The sea rests not because of the attraction of the heavenly bodies, which keep it in an endless ebb and flow—drawn towards the earth and drawn towards the sky alternately, and obeying neither impulse solely, it *cannot* rest. Know we nothing of this in our own bosoms? There is a tide of feeling which ebbs



alternately to heaven and earth. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." We are conscious, surely, of high instincts that tell of God; conscious besides of grovelling propensities that drag us down to earth; low wants and lofty longings. So long as these hold man's soul alternately, is rest possible? One force must overcome the other before that can be. The love of God must master the world's attraction, or if not, then the soul is "like the troubled sea when it cannot rest."—*Ibid.*

(3) *Arising partly from outward circumstances.*

[16267] The man who has not peace in himself cannot get peace from circumstances. Place him where you will, he carries an unquiet heart along with him. Can you keep the ocean from the wind? Can you bid the gust and the hurricane be still? . . . Can you save man from circumstances? Nay. We are here to control the circumstances in which we are placed, and transmute them, and get good and spirituality out of them. It certainly may be true that a man is made restless and miserable by circumstances. It certainly may be that the ocean is ploughed into billows by the tempest blasts, but all that they did was to lash the ocean and show that it was yielding water and not firm rock. All that circumstances have done when they make a man restless is this, to show that he is not incorporated with the Rock of Ages.—*Ibid.*

2 The power of memory to recall a remorseful past.

[16268] It is one result of the ocean's restlessness that the ravages which it makes are not engulfed in its depths for ever. Navies may sink, and the waters roll above them as if they were to appear no more, but the wanderer on some distant beach is startled in his ramble to read the dismal tale of shipwreck in the planks that are stranded on the shore. Now there is something fearfully like this in the constitution of our souls. Deeds that we have done, and thoughts that we have dwelt upon, sink like stones into the ocean, and we expect that they will appear no more. But it would seem that a thing once lodged in the memory never can be lost. It may sink for a time—long years—as in the ocean depths, but there are tempests which may bring it up again some day. There are moments of existence when we seem endued with an unusual, startling power to recall a long train of past occurrences, when the mind seems almost supernaturally active, not at the bidding of our will. By night, alone, when music had touched the string of long-forgotten associations, when conversation had left a strange excitement in the spirit, we have known what it is to find a marvellous rapidity in the power of thought, and all the past come as freshly before us as if it were yesterday. With a mind like that, man is not one moment secure of rest; he is doomed to recollect. A dull and heavy body blinds his senses, and so buries his misery for a time; but

it is there, and God can cast it up at any moment in the shape of mire and dirt. This is the misery of remorse—the worst torment of man's stormy mind. It only needs that the body which buries recollection for a time shall be dissolved, and then there begins the eternity of a hell of recollections—when every act of bygone guilt which has not been sunk in the blood of Christ shall be as fresh and vivid before a sinner's eyes as it was at the moment when it was committed.—*Ibid.*

3 Want of self-knowledge.

[16269] We do not see that peace is the thing we want. We sigh for it now and again, but we do not pursue it. Gold we pursue, and pleasure, and power, and fame, with all our might, through all our lifetime; we do not covet peace except when we are weary, and want to sleep and dream. Look at yon solitary man by the riverside. He is watching the stream flow, and the waving weeds; and he is saying to himself, "I would this restless bosom were like yon tranquil river, not torn and tossed as I feel it by these restless passions, like the waves of the stormy sea!" And why not? He is unhappy, perhaps almost constantly unhappy; and, when he is by himself, he will sometimes break down, and weep over the life he has been leading, and is leading still; and there it ends. He has not the courage to look very closely into himself, and ask what is at the bottom of this discontent. He lets another sigh escape him, which goes to swell that great wind of unrest which goes moaning about the world, and hurries back to some scene of distraction, where he may get rid, for a time, of that burden of himself which he cannot bear. Men's feeling about peace is often, then, no more than a sentiment—a flower that springs up in the heart and withers in a day; a momentary smile upon a stern countenance.—*Rev. E. Johnson.*

4 Want of union.

(1) *With God.*

[16270] Broken health, pains, malformations, insanities, idiocies, and all bodily and mental degeneracies and anomalies are the dreadful issue of spiritual depravity and alienation from the life of God. These blots on the fair creation; these spots on the sun of human happiness; these failures; these abortions; these distorted, mangled shapes of things, that must shock and appal the perfect, unfallen intelligences, whom we may suppose to be their witnesses, are the sole progeny of sin. They tell us that there is abroad an enemy of order, of peace, of holiness, and they never can be ended until that enemy is slain.—*Ibid.*

[16271] No peace was ever won from fate by subterfuge or agreement. No peace is ever in store for any of us but that which we shall win by victory over shame or sin—victory over the sin which oppresses as well as over that which corrupts.—*Ruskin.*

[16272] Here is the secret of our discords.

The flesh lusteth against the spirit, so that we cannot do the things that we would. Light and darkness, life and death, heaven and hell contending within each man's soul. He has a spiritual part which would lead him to all pure thoughts, peaceable ways, which would make him gentle, easy to be entreated, willing to forego and to forgive, a very child of God; and he has a passionate part which leads him to lust and to wrath and to hate, and to the destruction of himself and of his brethren. An instinct which directs him to God, to the Father of spirits; an instinct which leads him away from God and devilwards. While this strife goes on there cannot be peace. This is the secret of the deep unrest in men's souls. Ever yearning and dreaming of a blissful quiet that is so foreign to their actual condition. This is why the great silence and calm of a starlight night softens us; why the sight of a sleeping babe in its innocence sometimes moves us to tears; or a strain of soft music quells, for the time, some irritated or angry mood; or the face of one we love sleeping placidly in death—these sights, these sounds, speak to us of a state where the unholy war of passion has ceased, of that peace which ought to be ours, and which would be ours, were it not for this terrible foe in our own bosom, in the mind at enmity with God.—*Rev. E. Johnson.*

(2) *With man.*

[16273] One would have thought, if one did not know the facts, that it had been almost impossible to make the Church of Christ a scene of discord. One might suppose that an instinct would be found acting so strongly in all Christian minds in favour of peace, that no rents and schisms in the body of Christ could take place. But how different has been the history of the Christian Church! Here, again, there has been constant strife between sentiment and passion, between the old man and the new, the elder and the younger brother, the carnal and the spiritual. And again and again the carnal prevails. The God of peace is forgotten, and those spiritual and peaceful feelings which are the inspiration of the Holy Spirit have been suffocated in the smoke of controversy, or even quenched in rivers of blood. Christians do not guard and fence about the sacred enclosure of heaven's peace, and yet they are dismayed when it is broken into and trampled upon!—*Ibid.*

5 Want of faith.

[16274] Some minds are strangers to peace. How can they have peace, for they have no faith? They are as a rolling thing before the whirlwind, having no fixed basis, no abiding foundation of belief. These are the darlings of the school of modern thought, whose disciples set themselves as industriously to breed doubt as if salvation came by it. Doubt and be saved is their gospel, and who does not see that this is not the gospel of peace? Forsooth they are receptive, and are peering about for fresh light, though long ago the Sun of Righteousness has risen. Such uncertainty suits me not. I must

know something, or I cannot live: I must be sure of something, or I have no motive from which to act. God never meant us to live in perpetual questioning. His revelation is not, and cannot be, that shapeless cloud which philosophical divines make it out to be. There must be something true, and Christ must have come into the world to teach us something saving and reliable; He cannot mean that we should be always rushing through bogs and into morasses after the will-o'-the-wisp of intellectual religion. There is assuredly some ascertainable, infallible, revealed truth for common people; there must be something sure to rest upon. I know that it is so, and declare unto you what I have heard and seen. There are great truths which the Lord has engraven upon my very soul, concerning which all the men on earth and all the devils in hell cannot shake me. As to these vital doctrines, an immovable and unconquerable dogmatism has laid hold upon my soul, and therefore my mind has peace. A man's mind must come to a settlement upon eternal truths by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, or else he cannot know what peace is.—*Anon.*

X. ASPECTS OF FALSE PEACE.

1 The peace of ignorance.

[16275] It has been well said, "The deepest want of man is not a desire for *happiness*, but a craving for *peace*—not a wish for the gratification of any desire, but a craving for the repose of acquiescence in the will of God." And so intense is the human craving for peace, and so intolerable the unsatisfied craving that men catch at and content themselves with spurious imitations of peace. They will get peace at any cost, they cannot live without it, and so they sometimes care little whether it be true or false, lasting or transient. For example, thousands of men and women are at peace. They live quiet, easy-going lives, without anxiety or sense of danger. They go drifting on through life, year after year finding them much the same. They hope that somehow or other it will go well with them at the last; that as it has fared with thousands so it will fare with them. They are as good as others, better in some respects. Of course they have infirmities and failings—who has not? Of course they might be better; so might any one be. Of course, if they were to begin life again, they would act differently in some things, but then so would every one, and God is very merciful, and He will, or they hope He will, forgive them. So they are at peace. No sermons will alarm them: they have got over that. Their theology just suits their own case; it is an easy, comfortable, accommodating, soporific system, and they are at peace. But it is a peace that slowly and surely ends in the peace of death.—*Rev. F. Blunt, D.D.*

2 The peace of indifference.

[16276] It is an absolute fact that numbers

of persons have never really thought for five minutes together about what God requires of them. We can scarcely talk of their being at peace. They have never been ruffled in their inmost soul except for a passing hour. Some judgment, a sudden death, a sickness, a loss—these perhaps shot through them a sort of cold shuddering sensation, a dread vague and painful, a shrinking from something they could not describe. They endured it, they grieved, they were depressed; for a time their usual spirits forsook them, but that was all—it soon passed away. Back came the old life of buying and selling, getting and saving, spending and enjoying, losing and retrieving, or the old round of pleasure and amusement, visiting and receiving, talking and gossiping; and in the busy life or in the frivolous life, as the case may be, there is no anxious thought about the future, except the future of their business, their investments, their retirement, or the future of their pleasures, their prospects, their entertainments. They are, in a sense, at peace, for no terrors, no stings of conscience, no vision of the judgment-seat ever disturb these godless, selfish, unlovely, wasted souls of theirs. They are at peace, but it is like the peace of a stagnant murky pool in the recesses of a mountain cavern. It is true no wind ruffles it, no breath ripples it; yet for the same reason no ray of God's sun can ever play on its black surface: it never can and never shall reflect the blue vault of heaven.—*Ibid.*

### 3 The peace of presumption.

[16277] There is a man who is at peace . . . whose conclusions are very difficult to disturb, who has missed because he has perverted the true peace. He says in effect, "I am one of God's elect, and therefore I can never be cast away. Warn me not of the fatal danger of indwelling sin; speak not to me of the necessity of obedience: I will not test myself by the Sermon on the Mount, nor measure my stature by my growth in likeness to Christ. I *feel* I am safe, and therefore I *know* it. I was justified, and so there is no condemnation. I am at peace."—*Ibid.*

### 4 The peace of self-complacency.

[16278] There is a type of character, the most plausible, found even amongst persons who are true-hearted, generous, and noble-natured. Peace may be found in a sense of self-satisfaction at duties well performed—duties personal, domestic, social, public, religious. It is a delicate task to analyze and discriminate between what is right and true and what is sinful and false in this peace. For is there not a peace of conscience which ought to come to us when we have done our duty to the utmost of our ability? Ought we not to find peace when we have attended church, listened to the sermon, read our Bibles, said our prayers? Is not the sense of peace that succeeds an echo heard in the chambers of the heart of the whisper of God's approval, as He breathes within our souls the

words, "Peace be unto you"? Let us especially fix our thoughts on this one point. Not always is that voice the voice of God; it cannot be the voice of God if He has been shut out of our hearts, if the work we have done has been done without a sense of His presence and without a desire to please Him. The mere performance of duty is not enough to merit His approval. Apart from motive and purpose, apart from love and faith, duty well done cannot bring God's peace. It may have been successful, satisfactory; good men may commend it, and we may feel at peace as we think it over; but if God has been left out of it altogether, if no pure motive made the duty sacred and the work blessed, then the peace is not God's peace. It may not spring from pride, conceit, vanity, but from quiet self-satisfaction. We may be at peace with the world, at peace with our friends, our family, at peace with ourselves, but not of necessity at peace with God.—*Ibid.*

[16279] Is not this a common danger even to the best amongst us—the temptation to do our daily work not for God, but merely for ourselves or for others, and, because we ourselves are well pleased with it, to think God is well pleased, though, indeed, we had taken no account of Him? We did it heartily, but not "as unto the Lord." Self was the centre, not God. Self-pleasing was our motive, or, if not a conscious self-pleasing, perhaps our work was motiveless; we did it mechanically, and nowhere, in any of the springs of the machinery, or even in the inmost recess of our spirits, consciously or unconsciously, confessed or secret, lurked there the fear and love of God. And therefore, though the task was well done, the duty carefully fulfilled, the result satisfactory, and the peace of mind that followed comforting and refreshing, still it was not "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," not the peace in which God will keep them whose minds are stayed on Him.—*Ibid.*

## XI. CONTRAST BETWEEN THE PEACE OF THE WORLD AND THE PEACE OF GOD.

The world proposes to give peace by gratifying nature, the gospel by subduing nature.

[16280] Men want peace, and the world has said, "Peace, peace!" and they find that "there is no peace." And so it comes to pass that we go on through boyhood, and manhood, and old age, struggling, and hoping, and disappointed; ever seeming near to peace, and never placing our grasp upon it, till there is but one chance of rest left—the quiet and the silence of the grave. There are two ways of seeking peace; there are two promises made to the craving human heart exactly the same in words, diametrically opposite in meaning. There is the word promised, "Peace, peace," and God answers that, in the words, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked!" and there is, besides that, Christ's promise, "Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near."



The world's method is this, "Gratify the desire that burns within you. So long as it lasts, it is your passion and your torment. Slake it by indulgence, and be at rest. My peace means the satisfying of every inclination." There is a meaning and a truth in that promise, brethren, and if only there were no other world but this, and if only there were no judgment to come, and if only there were no such thing as conscience, the man who denies himself nothing would be the man who gets rest from himself and from the fever that burns within him. It would be wise and well to live as men live on the world principle: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Now the peace which Christ proclaims is not this peace at all, but another altogether. The world's peace is the indulgence of the heart as if it were in a state of health: "Let nature have her way," Christ's peace is the healing of a disordered heart. It does not consist in giving the rein to desires, but in mastering them. It consists in placing the whole soul under the discipline of the cross, and "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." We are "sick to death," sick of our own selfishness and our own unregenerated hearts; and we are here in this world to be cured.—*Rev. F. Robertson.*

[16281] The world's peace comes by adding fuel to the fever; Christ's peace comes by curing it.—*Ibid.*

## XII. HOMILETICAL HINTS.

[16282] "The peace of God which passeth all understanding" is the peace Christ left to men. This is that peace in which God has promised to keep His children as the normal condition of their regenerate lives. Those lives must in one sense be often troubled; God's peace will not make them otherwise. Clouds and storms will gather and break; His power will not be shown in driving them away, nor in lessening their fury, nor in sheltering us from them, nor in hardening our hearts that we shall not feel them. But it will be shown in keeping us, deep down in the recesses of our secret souls, in perfect peace, still stayed on Him and His eternal strength, because underneath are His everlasting arms. It is as when a tempest has risen and lifted up the waves of the sea before which great ships are driven as its fury increases into a hurricane, and yet a hundred fathoms deep in the ocean bed, far beneath all the rage and tumult of wind and wave, there is calm, rest, perfect peace, because beneath there lies the rocky bed, firm and unchanging, on which a whole world of waters may be stayed for ever.—*Rev. F. Blunt, D.D.*

[16283] Very seldom is Christ's peace given to men all at once, and never can it be abiding here. We have glimpses of it in the first fresh days after we have turned to God. We learn it and keep it while we are enjoying some special intercourse with our best and holiest friends;

and it comes to us like a refreshing shower of evening rain after summer drought when we have known great sorrow and have resigned our lives and our wills wholly to God, and have leaned with childlike love on Him. But in common daily life, is it not the case that this peace becomes worn out, marred, trampled upon? Do we not feel again and again the cloud of disappointment, dissatisfaction, uneasy inquietude settle over us? It is not any one sin or any particular negligence or any wilful transgression that troubles us. We cannot confess any grievous trespass, and yet we have a heavy heart and troubled conscience. We feel guilty, though we scarcely know why: the hope, and gladness, and elasticity of our spiritual life are gone; the peace of other days is fled. We may be sure the fault is this, we have not "stayed our souls on God." Probably we have been negligent, faithless, inattentive in private prayer; have found excuses for shortening it; have been too much engrossed with other things to spare time for meditation and communion. Or we have been indulging in some sin which we will not confess, have surrendered ourselves to worldliness, been drawn into the vortex of pleasure, and lost our self-recollectedness; have yielded to some subtle form of worldliness within our hearts, eager desire for admiration, and thirst for human praise; have given way to ill-temper, or been sinful, or hard, or selfish, or sullen, or hasty, or unkind. And now, like guilty children, we hang at a distance from Him, and there is no confidence between us and Him, our minds are not being "stayed on Him," so He is not keeping us, He cannot keep us in perfect peace.—*Ibid.*

[16284] Would that then we might remember and repeat as a prayer the words, "O Father, stay my mind on Thee, for elsewhere it can find no peace; stay it on Thee, for it has been staying on a thousand things where Thou art not; it has been stayed on self, which without Thee is sinful and selfish, and it has grown very weary. Therefore do Thou stay it on Thee, for I cannot move it, lift it, rest it. But in Thee, O Lord, is everlasting strength: put forth that strength towards Thy troubled servant, and raise me, body, soul, and spirit, to Thyself—stay me on Thee, give me Thy perfect peace, and keep me in it for ever."—*Ibid.*

## IMPARTED STRENGTH.

### I. THE MANIFESTATION OF STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS (2 COR. XII. 10).

#### 1 Force of the paradox.

*The conscious insufficiency of self stayed upon the all-sufficiency of God.*

[16285] It is not only complex minds that have to betake themselves to paradox to utter their spiritual experience. The simplest soul

that intensely lives the highest life wants sometimes to utter things that defy its power of utterance, and its earthly state is in such miserable contrast with its heavenly visions that it can only express the relation by what seems a mockery. I die, but yet I live. I live, yet not I, but Christ in me. I glory in persecution. I am cast down, yet not forsaken. I have nothing, yet I possess all things. I am poor, yet I make many rich. I am blind, but yet I see. My case is hopeless, yet I am saved by hope. I am lame, but from time to time I go to the beautiful gates of a distant heaven. I lie at rich men's doors, but I nestle in Abraham's bosom. I have a hard fight only to live, yet I am kept fighting by a life that never leaves me. I am sadly alone, yet I am not alone. I am a foolish child, yet I am wise unto salvation. The weak things of the world I see bringing down the things that are mighty. Babies and sucklings utter perfect praise. A man that hath no music in his soul, yet is adding daily to the music of the world. Some that have little sense of beauty are leading the most beautiful lives. And some who seem to themselves to have a thorn in the flesh, marring half their usefulness, and depressing their whole lives, yet become the source of an almost infinite spiritual power. Such was Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong."—*Rev. P. Forsyth.*

[16286] It is true that a peasant *may* know the mind of God better than a pedant. The absence of grammar need be no hindrance to a Christlike humility of soul, and a despised beggar *may feel* God as a whole university cannot. But never think to rely on a paradox in a region where speech and logic can easily cover the problems. Don't think you are better qualified to decide on the Fourth Gospel because you are untainted with either Greek or philosophy, and let alone the metaphysics of God if you haven't done something with Plato or Kant. But when you are in a world where the Father meets and converses with His child's soul, when you are laid on a sick-bed where you see visions and dream dreams of Him, when you are ruined in business so that you are built up in fortitude, love, and grace, when all your mental powers, through some continuous fleshly thorn, fail you till you are humbled to receive a God you cannot acquire, then glory in your weakness, rejoice in tribulation, be strong in the very fact that you are weak, and feel in great humility that you have in you more of the world's chief power than in the time of health, wealth, and unbroken ease. The *spiritual* is the home of paradox. There alone a man may be strong in proportion as he is weak.—*Ibid.*

## 2 Spiritual results.

*The life of humble, patient faith, displaying God's own power.*

[16287] There may be a faith in you for which you can give no reason but the noble life it sustains. There is a Divine foolishness which upsets at once the laws of a systematic reckon-

ing and glories in the strength with which it feels itself weak. There is a secret assurance of inexhaustible power which can afford to set forth its infirmities in the world's very face, which makes a man feel most victorious when he is confuted by all the tests of world or church. There is a glory which so excelleteth that all a man's weaknesses are positive gain if they do but make room for this supreme glory to enter in. There is a kind of strength which does not appear till every other power has gone in. When all the common stars have gone down, the Sun of this strength arises with healing in His wings.—*Ibid.*

[16288] I can take you where a life-long pain is developing a perfectly gentle intelligence and an utterly sweet will. I can walk you further, and show you where domestic torment is being bravely borne, and the crucified ones, though they fall sometimes beneath their load, rise again and go on, hopeless, but for the hope that daily looks in on them in the smile of Christ. I could take you where women, out of sheer pity, take upon themselves gratuitous trouble with children who are neither kith nor kin, and with invalids in whom they have neither part nor lot except in the bond of Christ. I could show you, if I go far enough, quiet women growing pinched in face and grey in hair, yet bearing up, and hoping against hope, with devils of husbands, who are irritable when sober and malicious when drunk. I could show you husbands paying fine after fine for wives that have grown fiends, in the hope that some time, some time the weight of patience would prove too much for the strength of sin. I could show you women slaving for invalid husbands, and racking inventive brains to support their children. I could tell you of husbands nursing with infallible cheerfulness invalid wives, and widowers trying with rough and untaught hands to wash, dress, and feed an orphan of two. I could find for you sister and brother bearing up together, each leaning on the other under disaster, poverty, wrong; and the woman developing out of her sex's weakness an astonishing strength when the man fell down in her slender arms. You need not go very far to find noble souls wearing the mask of a smile upon a heart that is without hope, till the very muscles of their face are sore with the effort, which is one of will alone. The dead smile more calmly, but not so sweetly as these. They would be happier if they could but look more miserable. But a look of misery from them means a pang of misery to some they love; and they go about wearing on their face a gracious lie, because a dear life may be kept in if hope can be kept up.—*Ibid.*

[16289] The true cross has left plenty of relics behind it. It grows the faster as it is cut and carried away. It will strike from a slip. Bury your fragment and it will live. Wear it in the silence of your heart, in the depth of your renouncing will, and it will multiply itself till your silence and what seems your weak-

ness become a broad green tree for the weary birds of the air to shelter in. Strength is not measured by your power to do only, but just as often by your power to endure. And whether in doing or enduring, strength is always to be measured by your power to believe. The strength of a life is in proportion neither to intellect, nor passion, nor will, but to faith.—*Ibid.*

[16290] It might conceivably be that in some great crisis of the world, when all trust in large intellects or powerful wills had broken down, that men's faith should be kept alive by none of these, but by the persistent and unshakable belief of some suffering soul, powerful only to suffer, and yet to believe; lying, perhaps, on a bed of pain, but yet with clear, calm soul calling out to the world in suspense, "Still I see, still I see. God holds the world still, and is guiding it to the perfect end." Such a crisis is a conceivable thing, though it would mean a second incarnation of the Son of God. It is the very essence of the first. And as that is eternal, we need no second. Christ saved the world by His eternal, indestructible faith. In total physical prostration, in the abeyance of every high faculty which men most praise, deserted by His dearest, with the hateful or the indifferent for His nearest, He yet, by the simple power of faith, by His belief both in God and man, has made that weak hour to be the source and centre of the only worldwide moral power. From Christ's cross streams the impulse of the strong and the comfort of the weak.—*Ibid.*

[16291] See that man who moves about among his neighbours as if he were enveloped in a felt but unseen cloud of sanctity. He breathes an air which is above controversy, and yet he has no Pharisaic feeling that controversy is below him. He is swift to hear but slow to speak. When human sin and wrong call for a condemnation, he condemns firmly, with an unspoken reserve of mercy for the sinning soul. When human weakness meets with the penalty of weakness, he has a tear in his eye for the weak one, while he says the judgment is just. He is painfully fair to all sides, and almost weakly distrustful of his own verdict or powers. Few men are weaker he would tell you. You can see that not one in a thousand has his power. What is the secret of this contradiction? It is only the paradox of the earthly and the heavenly. By himself, it is true, as he says, few men are weaker. Joined with that power to which he has given possession of his life he is a very tower of strength. Years ago there was an experience which shook to its roots his self-trust, and cut the ground clean away from beneath his self-will. The world may have forgotten it, or may never have known it. Those who remember have long forgiven it. He has done neither—neither forgotten nor forgiven it. . . . His own will was irremediably shaken, but it gave place to the will of God, and henceforth all life took a changed aspect. It was to be conquered less by effort than by submission. Any strength of

his was to come henceforth by the power and the persistency with which he knew himself weak. If he ever thinks of this late won and unsought power of his among men, he can only say, "When I am weak then am I strong."—*Ibid.*

[16292] Weakness is not the cause of the strength. Paul does not say so. Strength must come out of the strong. Paul only puts the two together. They exist together. The one is but the occasion of the other, not its cause. My weakness opens a door for the influx of Divine power.—*Ibid.*

[16293] Have you never heard of cases where powers that would bless a nation almost were made useless for that end, and had by daily struggle to be bent to feed a prolonged patience, and build up a single beautifully-resigned life with the force that might have forged a name. Where did these powers go? To waste? What became of the old ambitions? Did they die? No, they took other form. If they died, they died to live transfigured. There is a dignity that doth hedge a king. The play of great power invests a man with worshipfulness, and we greet with profound admiration the statesman who, with unique insight, steers a nation to glory by the path of truth and right. But what is the dignity of the heroic king compared with the sanctity of the suffering king? The king uncrowned has a kind of power which the king crowned could never wield. The queen who goes to a revolutionary prison between wild guards, bareheaded, unjewelled, with an open-breasted gown, lays a spell upon human hearts which a whole coronation service cannot raise. And there is round the silent sick-bed of a paralyzed genius who embraces, after a dreadful struggle, his new doom cheerfully, silently, with smiles as deep as those that cover the sunlit sea—there is round his head a halo which shines only on sorrow's kings, and his is a nobility that none can touch but God's princes of the blood.—*Ibid.*

## II. THE MANIFESTATION OF STRENGTH IN TEMPTATION.

**The Christian is never left defenceless against the assaults of Satan.**

[16294] There are great and violent temptations which you have not yet been tried with; and when those happen we must have recourse to God for an extraordinary assistance. . . . And this the apostle assures us of in the words, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it." That is, in case of great and violent temptations (such as the Christians in the height of their persecutions were exposed to), God will secretly minister strength and support equal to the force and power of the temptation. And this God did in an extraordinary manner to the Christian



martyrs, and that to such a degree as made them joyfully to embrace their sufferings, and with the greatest cheerfulness in the world to endure those torments which no human patience was able to bear.—*Anon.*

[16295] Then I saw in my dream that the Interpreter took Christian by the hand, and led him into a place where was a fire burning against a wall, and one standing by it, always casting much water upon it, to quench it; yet did the fire burn higher and hotter. "Then," said Christian, "what means this?" The Interpreter answered, "This fire is the work of grace that is wrought in the heart; he that casts water upon it, to extinguish and put it out, is the devil; but in that thou seest the fire, notwithstanding, burns higher and hotter, thou shalt also see the reason of that." So he had him about to the back side of the wall, where he saw a man with a vessel of oil in his hand, of which he did also continually cast, but secretly into the fire. "Then," said Christian, "what means this?" The Interpreter answered, "This is Christ, who continually, with the oil of His grace, maintains the work already begun in the heart; by means of which, notwithstanding what the devil can do, the souls of His people prove gracious still. And in that thou sawest that the man stood behind the wall to maintain the fire; this is to teach thee that it is hard for the tempted to see how this work of grace is maintained in the soul."—*J. Bunyan.*

[16296] There is no doubt that under every kind of temptation we have a power of endurance, if we employ properly the strength that is granted us. But it is not the same thing to possess the power of conquering and to be victorious, as the apostle himself has shown in very cautious language, saying, "God will make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it," not that you will bear it. For many do not sustain temptation, but are overcome by it. Now God enables us not to sustain temptation (otherwise there would appear to be no struggle), but to have the power of sustaining it. But this power which is given us to enable us to conquer may be used, according to our faculty of free will, either in a diligent manner, and then we prove victorious, or in a slothful manner, and then we are defeated. What further reason for a struggle could remain to him who cannot be overcome? Or what merit is there in victory, where the power of successful resistance is taken away?—*Anon.*

### III. THE REQUIRED ACTIVITY OF IMPARTED STRENGTH.

**Powerful weapons are not put into our hands to lie idle.**

[16297] The way to be strong is to act on the credit of strength being given. Strength is received in the act of obeying. When the path of duty is clear, it is want of faith to continue ask-

ing for strength, and not to act upon it.—*G. W. Mylne.*

[16298] Now we labour, and our lamps fluctuate among the gusts and temptations of the present world; but only let us give heed that our flame burn in such strength that the winds of temptation may rather fan the flame than extinguish it.—*Augustine.*

## UNION WITH CHRIST AND FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

### I. DEFINITION AND NATURE OF UNION WITH CHRIST.

**The dwelling of Christ in man, and man in Christ.**

[16299] The union restored between fallen man and God, in and through Christ, is ethical rather than physical. But very strong expressions are used concerning it. "I live," says St. Paul, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20); "Christ is our life" (Col. iii. 4); "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17). The Holy Spirit bears witness with their spirits that Christians are sons of God (Rom. viii. 14-16). Prayer is the voice of the Spirit Himself in their hearts (ver. 26). Yet Paul's individuality stands out distinct on the inspired page, and is not interfered with by the presence of Christ in him. He lived with the consciousness of perfect freedom, and yet his human life was continually taken up into the life of God.—*Anon.*

[16300] Christ is declared to be our righteousness and life; we are united to Him, not merely in feeling, but by covenant, and vitally by His Spirit, so that the life which we live is Christ living in us.—*Ibid.*

[16301] The connection between Christ and His believing followers is expressed by St. Paul in words of profound significance—as "being in Christ." So close is the living union between the Head and the members, that they form part of one whole. Fellowship with Christ from which the spirit and the life of Christ pass into the soul, makes the believer a partaker in all that Christ Himself is.—*Dr. Ullmann.*

[16302] The true Christ of man is the Christ in the soul. "Christ in you." It is not the mere Christ of the book and the creed, but the Christ of the soul. He is in the soul. First, as the chief object of love. Second, the chief subject of thought. Thirdly, the chief sovereign of activities.—*D. Thomas, D.D.*

[16303] The union of Christ with believers is (1) Personal, *i.e.*, the whole Person of Christ as God. Man is united to the believer, and the whole person of the believer, body and soul, united to Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 15-17. (2) Spiritual.

"He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit," 1 Cor. vi. 17; Christ and the Church have the same spirit; He without measure, and the Church in measure, 1 Cor. vi. 17, xii. 12, 13; 1 John iii. 24, iv. 13. (3) Vital. Such as exists between the vine and the branches; imparting spiritual life to the believer; the soul, engrafted into Christ, receives new life; Christ lives in His people and maintains them in life. It is a union, not of contiguity or nearness, but of incorporation and indwelling, John xiv. 19; Gal. ii. 20. (4) Mystical. Not physical, as the head of the natural body is one with the members; nor moral, as the union merely of affection, as we say "a true friend is another self." It is more than a relation to Christ as a political Head. It implies such real conjunction as imparts new being and a vivifying influence, which, however incomprehensible it be, is real and true, transcending all earthly relationships, the nearest and closest. Christ dwelling in the believer, and the believer in Christ; as in the marriage relation. Christ gives Himself to His people, and they voluntarily yield themselves to Him, and the two are one, Matt. xix. 6; Eph. v. 31, 32. (5) Holy and pure. Conformable to the nature of Christ, and the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of Holiness. (6) Indissoluble. Christ and His Church never can be separated. His body can never lose a joint or limb.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes.*

[16304] Christ *for* us is the idea of the Old Testament; Christ *in* us is the idea of the New. "I in them and they in Me" was His last prayer. "We will come and take up our abode" is His most precious promise. "Christ in us" is our most assured "hope of glory." . . . This is real, vital Christianity. It is not a creed; it is not a system; it is not a law; it is a life—the life of Christ in the soul of man; the life which He has come that we might have—abundantly.—*Bp. Magee.*

[16305] There is a mysterious and indissoluble union between Christ and every true Christian. The man that is once joined to Him by faith is as closely united as a member of the body is united to the head. So long as Christ, his Head, lives, so long he will live. He cannot die unless Christ can be plucked from heaven, and Christ's life destroyed. But this, since Christ is very God, is totally impossible! "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over Him" (Rom. vi. 9). That which is Divine, in the very nature of things, cannot die. Christ's life secures the continuance of spiritual life to His people. They shall not fall away. They shall persevere unto the end. The Divine nature of which they are partakers shall not perish. The incorruptible seed within them shall not be destroyed by the devil and the world. Weak as they are in themselves, they are closely knit to an immortal Head, and not one member of His mystical body shall ever perish.—*Bp. Kyle.*

[16306] Christ's life secures the resurrection-life of His people. Just as He rose again from the grave, because death could not hold Him one moment beyond the appointed time, so shall all His believing members rise again in the day when He calls them from the tomb. The victory that Jesus won when He rolled the stone away and came forth from the tomb, was a victory not only for Himself, but for His people. If the Head rose, much more shall the members.—*Ibid.*

[16307] What is the secret of the Christian's present strength, and of his strong hope of good things to come? Invisible union with an invisible Saviour in heaven! Each child of God is invisibly linked to the throne of the Rock of Ages. When that throne can be shaken, and not till then, we may despair. But Christ lives, and we shall live also.—*Ibid.*

[16308] Christ's union with men is not a shadow, is not a figure, is not a dream: it is the statement of a fact as literal as any law in nature. The union of sunlight with vegetables is not more real. The flow of nourishing sap in fruits is not more literal than the interfusion and soul-union of Christ's soul with men's.—*H. W. Beecher.*

## II. ITS HIDDEN LIFE.

### 1 Reality and importance of this inward vitality.

(1) *There is a life not beyond only, but within and above earthly life.*

[16309] The world deals with revelation on a principle of eclecticism. It is pleasant to be assured that, the game of life successfully played out, there is a blessed immortality, not clearly defined, but absolutely certain for all but criminals and convicts, in store for a weary frame and an outworn intellect. There shall each deepest interest of this life be renewed (they hope) in luxurious memory—there shall each domestic joy, each delicious affection, live again in perfected, because eternalized, fruition—there shall every painful effort, whether moral or intellectual, be superseded for ever in a delightful facility, an absolute spontaneity, of being and knowing—there, in short, shall everything survive which was pleasant below, and everything be left behind us which was either irksome in the doing or laborious in the acquiring. The world will both keep itself and have another. The beauty of religion, in the eyes of the world, is, that it offers everything and demands nothing. While you are in prosperity, enjoy—enjoy twice over—because adversity will bring with it its own recompense, its own consolation. Live only in and for the present, and expect securely on your deathbed the clerical comfort and the sacramental viaticum. But the man who communes with himself, . . . and refuses to gamble with truth, . . . is aware that what we want is the eternal NOW. What makes this life so poor and dry and barren is its unsub-

stantiality, its vacuity, its vanity. We have everything and we are beggars. Not a breath of the east wind blows upon us, and yet we are parched and arid and withered. We have all, and have nothing. We hew out for ourselves cistern after cistern, and cistern after cistern holds no water. The Bible is the minister to this emptiness. At first sight you may imagine it to say only, There is a life after death; a life endless in duration, perfect in satisfaction. When you look more closely, you see that the real promise is an eternal life to be entered upon now. The man who waits till death for it will have missed it. The man who will live for ever—in that sense in which alone living is life—must begin to live now. Life is not extension, it is satisfaction, of being. Merely to live for ever might be a curse; the question is still behind, What, and how? What manner of life, and how to live it? St. Paul answers, Christ answers, To live indeed is to have God in you. To live indeed is to be a consciously forgiven and a consciously renewed man; to have peace with God, and to have strength from God; to know in whom you have believed, and to be able to do all things through Christ strengthening you.—*Dean Vaughan*.

[16310] Look at a coal covered with ashes; there is nothing appearing in the hearth but only dead ashes; there is neither light, nor smoke, nor heat; and yet when these embers are stirred to the bottom, there are found some living gleads, which do but contain fire, and are apt to propagate it. Many a Christian breast is like this hearth, no life of grace appearing there for the time, either to his own sense or to the apprehension of others. Whilst the season of temptation lasteth, all seems cold and dead; yet still at the worst there is a secret coal in their bosom, which, upon the gracious motion of the Almighty, doth manifest some remainders of that Divine fire, as is easily raised to a perfect flame. Let no man, therefore, deject himself, or censure others, for the utter extinction of that spirit which doth but hide itself in the soul for a glorious advantage.—*Spencer*.

[16311] The prayer of the devout Mahometan expresses what has been the innermost desire of innumerable hearts—"Give me a death in which there is no life, and a life in which there is no death." The prayer receives its answer in Christ; in His death our sin dies, and in His life the very life of God is made our own. How the death of Christ effects the destruction of our sin, we may be unable to tell. But it is enough that we know the fact that in God's idea, and according to the law of the kingdom of heaven, we are crucified with Christ. Sometimes through our union with Him sin may seem to perish as by a sudden blow. More frequently it dies slowly—dies as those died who were put to death by crucifixion. The nails are driven through its hands; it is tortured with an unsatisfied thirst; there are convulsive struggles

which last long, and which show that vitality has not gone out of it. It seems to perish at last by exhaustion.—*R. Dale, D.D.*

[16312] In the present state the least part of the saint's worth is visible. As the earth is fruitful in plants and flowers, but its riches are in mines of precious metal, and the veins of marble hidden in its bosom; true grace appears in sensible actions, but its glory is within. The sincerity of aims, the purity of affection, the impresses of the Spirit on the heart, the interior beauties of holiness, are only seen by God. Besides, such is the humility of eminent saints, that the more they abound in spiritual treasures, the less they show; as the heavenly bodies, when in nearest conjunction with the sun, and fullest of light, make the least appearance to our sight.—*H. Saller*.

(2) *The importance of the inner life is seen to lie not only in its everlasting nature, but in the fact that it is essentially a truer and more real life than the outward.*

[16313] A vast stride would be made in the direction of vital godliness if we could only be taught rightly to appreciate the comparative value of the two lives—the outward life and the inward. I know that it is difficult, next to impossible, to maintain this superhuman, this Divine estimate of the seen and the unseen. Yet we have no difficulty in asserting it concerning times past. Go back to an age in which Nero was ruling Rome, and Paul a prisoner in the barracks—you do not doubt which of those two men was really instinct with a more vital vitality; it is not only that the one was a fraticide and a matricide, and the other an innocent conscientious sufferer for duty; it is something far beyond this that we feel when we contrast the permanent influence, the net result, of those two lives—the one rescued from oblivion only by infamy, the other conquering still, and to conquer, wherever hearts feel or minds reason. The one was a thing of the present, and just went his way with the generation; the other was a man indestructible because God was in him: his immortality in heaven has its reflection, has its echo, has its pulsation, through every age and every language of earth.—*Dean Vaughan*.

[16314] The truest life is always the hidden. Even in regard to this world it is so. Principle, which you cannot see, is essentially higher than action, which you can. The man of ideas is a statesman of higher order than the adroit administrator. The man who has formed and adhered to a purpose is a nobler politician than the man who prides himself upon never having changed a detail. Thus far in things of the earth. How far above, then, on the same principle, must he stand, whose very principles and purposes have a hidden spring within them! If there be a fire of devotion, if there be a zeal of love, which moves the motive, how magnificent must be the life thus lived! Instead



of undervaluing the invisible in comparison with the seen, we shall begin to regard that life as the highest in which *all* is out of sight, and that as incomparably the poorest of which you can count the gains and handle the perquisites.—*Ibid.*

[16315] Not only is the fact of an inward life admitted, but in a vast multitude of cases there is a hope, an intention, more or less strong, of possessing it before we die. Common sense tells us that, if heaven is God's presence—if there shall be there neither politics nor polemics, neither crime nor scandal, neither news nor novels, but only such things as interest men of thought and soul, of love Divine and human, of pure heart and clean hands—it cannot be entered upon without training, without discipline, without effort and foretaste too; and that thus immortality itself, rightly understood, contains in it the other thought, union with God now. A man who would live after death must live before death in the same sense of living.—*Ibid.*

## 2 Its analyzed character.

### (1) *The Christian life is hidden in its origin.*

[16316] "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The soul itself is hidden within the covering of the body; and all that goes on within it is to a great extent hidden even from itself. A man is hidden within himself. He has not seen himself face to face. The soul is in a sense hidden in its own nature. We see our thoughts after they have arisen in the mind; but who can tell when and how they arise? What is memory, for example—that place or condition in which our past life and thoughts hide themselves? Now if all this is so far hidden in the natural man, so is the new life, and new thoughts, in the spiritual man. We may all know the date of our natural birth; but how few if any know the date of their spiritual birth!—*Rev. F. Fergusson, LL.D.*

### (2) *The Christian life is hidden in its greatest moments.*

#### a. In the time of self-dedication.

[16317] When a man takes the oath of allegiance to his country, it is in the presence of others; but when he dedicates himself to God, he is hidden with God. He is on the mountain-top, and the clouds are around him. The Christian life cannot be complete without a conscious, voluntary dedication of itself to God. The desire of the unregenerate life is to draw into its own possession all it can by force, by fraud, by competition, by expediency. Its first axiom is—Get as much as possible, and give as little as possible. It never dreams of giving itself away—of sacrificing itself. It does not seem to know that in seeking to fortify itself within such entrenchments, it is losing itself—that life is ebbing away as it struggles to guard it. The Christian man knows that in losing his

life in relation to this world, he is laying hold of eternal life; and so he takes that life and power, grace and prosperity, which God has given him, and carries them into the Holy of Holies, lays them upon the altar, and gives them back to God. The noblest action a man can perform on this earth is to sacrifice himself and his all for God's sake. He does that when he truly dedicates himself to God; for he holds himself bound thereby to break the sweetest tie of this life, whenever he is called to do so; and in this act his life is hid with Christ in God.—*Ibid.*

#### b. In the time of communion with God.

[16318] If we would be strong and happy—if we would conserve our spiritual power and influence, we must commune with God. In such communion the soul finds a haven into which it sails to adjust the compass of life. It is the place to which we bring the balance of life, disturbed by the jostle and friction of the world, that it may be rectified by the eternal standards; and where the soul, depressed by sorrow or fevered by the excitement of the world, may be brought to beat with the heart of God—where we can estimate on impartial ground how far we are realizing our end—where we have failed, where we have succeeded—what we have said and done;—where we can to some extent lift ourselves out of the time to which we belong, and contemplate the principles and tendencies of all times;—where we get the dying lamp fed with fresh oil; and where we enter into fellowship and sympathy with the great departed, for "they all live in God." Why does our religion enjoin exercises that can only be performed in solitude, such as meditation and secret prayer? Why are the public and domestic duties of religion not enough? Because the Christian life, being a hidden one, such private exercises are necessary and natural, and conformable to it as such.—*Ibid.*

[16319] In its highest joys the Christian life is hidden. When Jesus was transfigured, a bright cloud overshadowed His disciples, and He was hidden in the glory. When the Christian soul is in an ecstasy, it is hidden in the light of its own joy, as "a poet is hidden in the light of thought," or as "a lark is lost in the sun." But our faith is not always strong enough to realize much of this. In its deepest sorrows—the sorrows of repentance—and that mourning that springs from a thoughtful view of life, the Christian life is hidden. Jesus was hidden even from His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane; and the believer's greatest conflicts with sin are those that take place "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."—*Ibid.*

### (3) *The Christian life is hidden from the eye of the world.*

There is a chamber in the soul into which no eye can ever look but our own and God's;

the world has not the key to the Christian's life.

[16320] The Christian life is not only hidden in its own essence and nature, but that aspect of it which is open to the world is not really seen by the world. Nature may be hidden in two ways. It is hidden at midnight by the darkness; but it is also hidden at noonday from those who have scales on their eyes. In like manner Christianity, even as a manifested life, is hidden from the world. Nature has been called the "open secret." It is an open or manifested thing—a revelation; and yet it is a secret. The phenomena and law of gravitation were patent to all men from the beginning of the world. Every child playing with a ball, every soldier shooting an arrow, every apple falling from a tree, every raindrop falling from the sky, afforded illustrations of it. But although those manifestations were before the eyes of millions for thousands of years they were not understood—their common principle was hidden. It required the eye of a Newton to read what was so plainly written. Nature, then, is an open secret. We see only what we have the power to see. Two men visit Rome—the one knows the history of Rome, and the other does not. The one whose mind is destitute of the glorious associations of the city sees dingy ruins, but he does not see Rome; whereas to the other every stone speaks, and the very dust is stirring with life. And so the Son of God appeared in the world. To the believing eye He was discovered to be the Son of God—walking the world clothed with a garment of glory—"the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world." "The Word was made flesh, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." But to the unbelieving eye He was only a Nazarene—the son of a carpenter. "He had no form nor comeliness."

(4) *The Christian life is hidden with Christ in God.*

[16321] In the fulness of time He who had been hidden in the Father came forth. He continued hidden indeed from those who had not eyes to see Him—those who were not of a spiritual mind; but to His believing followers He unbosomed His hidden life and beauty. Through the garment of His humanity there shone forth rays from the inner splendour of His being. He imparted to them a measure of that glory He Himself had with the Father, before the world was. But when we say He came forth from God in coming into the world, it is not meant that He was not still dwelling in God; for He spoke of Himself as still being in the bosom of the Father, and still in heaven, even when He was on the earth. The result of this connection and identification is, that in the language and thought of the New Testament, Christ, on the one hand, is spoken of as being still in the world with His people; and His people, on the other hand, are spoken of as being with Him in God. On the one side, we

have such passages as the following: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world;" "Christ in you, the hope of glory." On the other side, we read: "God hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father;" "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;" "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Which-ever way, then, we view it, whether that Christ dwells in the Christian spiritually on earth, or that the Christian dwells with Christ representatively in heaven, the truth remains that our life is hid with Him in God. The Christian may be said to be already in heaven, at the right hand of God, in virtue of his relation to Christ. He is identified with Christ's resurrection, ascension, and universal rule. Our glorified humanity is hidden with Him in God, and all our persons and interests are represented by Him in and before the Father.—*Ibid.*

### III. ITS SOURCE AND MEANS.

**The working of God's Spirit in the heart of man, uniting him to Christ by faith and love.**

[16322] The Spirit must first take hold of us before we can live in Christ; and when He doth so, then we are enabled to exert that vital act of faith whereby we receive Christ. All this lies plain in that one Scripture, Job vi. 57: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me" (that is, by faith applies Me) "even he shall live by Me." So that these two, namely, the Spirit on Christ's part, and faith, His work, on our part, are the two ligaments by which we are knit to Christ. The Spirit's work in uniting or engrafting a soul into Christ is like the cutting off the graft from its native stock (which He doth by His illuminations and convictions), and closing it with the living stock when it is thus prepared, and so enabling it (by the infusion of faith) to suck and draw the vital sap, and thus it becomes one with Him. Or as the many members in the natural body, being all quickened and animated by the same vital Spirit, become one body with the head which is the principal member, Eph. iv. 4: "There is one body and one spirit."—*Flavel.*

[16323] The union is begun in our vivification, and completed in our actual receiving of Christ: the first is a bond of union on the Spirit's part, the second a bond of union on our part. "Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith" (Eph. iii. 17). And herein it is a door opened to let in many rich blessings to the soul; for by uniting us to Christ it brings us into special favour and acceptance with God (Eph. i. 6), makes us the special objects of Christ's conjugal love and delight (Eph. v. 29), draws from His heart sympathy and tender sense of all our miseries and burdens (Heb. xiv. 15).—*Ibid.*

[16324] That which linketh Christ to us is His mere mercy and love towards us ; that which tieth us to Him is our faith in the promised salvation revealed in the Word of truth.—*Hooker*.

[16325] Faith doth engraft a man, who is by nature a wild olive-branch, into Christ, as into the natural olive, and fetcheth sap from the root Christ, and thereby makes the tree bring forth fruit in its kind ; yea, faith fetcheth a supernatural efficacy from the death and life of Christ, by virtue whereof it metamorphoseth the heart of a believer, and createth and infuseth into him new principles of action ; so that what a treasure of all graces Christ hath stored up in Him, faith draineth and draweth them out to the use of a believer ; being as a conduit-cock, that watereth all the herbs in the garden ; yea, faith doth apply the blood of Christ to a believer's heart, and the blood of Christ hath in it not only a power to wash from the guilt of sin, but to cleanse and purge likewise from the power and stain of sin. And therefore, saith godly Hooker, if you would have grace, you must first of all get faith, and that will bring all the rest. Let faith go to Christ, and there is meekness, patience, humility, and wisdom, and faith will fetch all them to the soul : therefore, saith he, you must not look for sanctification till you come to Christ in vocation (John xv. 4, 5 ; Phil. iv. 13).—*Marr*.

#### IV. ITS OUTWARD MANIFESTATION.

In proportion as the inner life is vivid the outward life will be effective.

[16326] St. Paul was naturally a man of vigour. His very faults were those of energy. When he apprehended, or rather *was apprehended by*, Christ, he did not lose vigour ; he became more intense, more earnest, more executive than ever. The inward life does not distract, it concentrates—does not enervate, it emphasizes—the outward. While it calms, it stirs ; while it gives repose, it also gives force. You have seen the invigorating influence of a human passion. You have observed how love will make a timid woman courageous ; how it gives rush and flow to a desultory purposeless man, to have within himself the consciousness of a virtuous affection, for the sake of which it is worth while to be brave and necessary to be pure. You have said sometimes, of one and another among your friends, "I can scarcely recognize in him the same man"—and you have found the explanation afterwards in some secret kindling on the altar of his soul of a fire of human devotion. So is it in that one higher region still—that hidden life, that death to the world, of which St. Paul tells. If you wish to move hearts, if you wish to influence minds—if you wish to be a statesman where before you have been a politician, an orator where before you were a rhetorician—if you wish to warm where before you shone, to kindle where before

you dazzled—learn to live the life unseen, to come forth from God's presence into the communion and contact of men. The life hidden with Christ in God will show itself in an elevation, a dignity, a nobleness of spirit, due to a presence inwardly felt, and manifested without pretence or parade in the words and in the actions of the possessor.—*Dean Vaughan*.

[16327] To be in Christ, is to live in His ideas, character, spirit, as the atmosphere of being. Men everywhere are living in the ideas and characters of others. He who lives in the spirit of Raphael, becomes a painter ; he who lives in the spirit of Milton, becomes a poet ; he who lives in the spirit of Bacon, becomes a philosopher ; he who lives in the spirit of Cæsar, becomes a warrior ; he who lives in the spirit of Christ, becomes a man.—*Anon*.

[16328] Being in Christ, it is safe to forget the past ; it is possible to be sure of the future ; it is possible to be diligent in the present.—*A. Maclaren*.

[16329] A tree is most valuable when laden with ripe fruit, but it has a peculiar beauty when laden with blossom. It is spring-time with A. He is in bloom ; and, by the grace and blessing of the Heavenly Husbandman, will bear fruit in old age. His faith is weak, but his heart is warm. He will seldom venture to think himself a believer, but he sees, and feels, and does those things which no one could unless the Lord was with him. The very desire and bent of his soul is to God, and to the Word of His grace. His knowledge is but small, but it is growing every day.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes*.

[16330] Homer saith Ulysses caused himself to be bound to the mast of the ship, and every one of his fellows' ears to be stopped with wax, that they might not hearken to the songs of the sirens, and so be drowned in the sea. Faith fastens the soul to Christ, and so ravisheth its ears with the glad tidings of pardon, and peace, and eternal life, that it is deaf to the world's music.—*J. Swinnoek*.

[16331] If thy soul liveth the life of faith, thy heart is alive in an evil time ; and the life and courage of it is maintained from God, thy heart is maintained from the truth, power, and goodness of God. This life of faith is a quiet life ; it is a quiet life as to passions. Faith hath a wonderful power, to keep the mind in a calm serene temper ; it is the unbelieving soul that fretteth, and fumeth, and vexeth.—*Anon*.

[16332] To abide in Christ is to be always nigh unto Christ, in the spiritual company of Christ, and in communication with Christ. It doth not lie in a naked essential act of believing, whereby we are implanted into Christ, and will not go from Him ; but there is something of an especial, spiritual activity of the soul.—*J. Owen, D.D.*



## V. ITS NATURAL AND NECESSARY OUT-COME.

### Christian unity and fellowship.

[16333] What, then, are we to say of Christian union? Is it a dream? one of those illusions by which men try to escape from the hard world of reality into a world of beautiful possibilities where all falls into imaginary order, and none but voices of peace are heard. It is undeniable that some of the noblest Christian hearts have cherished this dream. Ever and again, from amidst the distractions of controversy and the miseries of unchristian strife, there has gone up the cry for a united Christian Church which should face the evils of the world, and the moral wretchedness which comes from division and unbelief. In a time like ours, which is big with all issues of good and evil—with heavenward and earthward aspirations alike—with the throes both of a wider faith and a deeper scepticism—the longing for Christian union has grown in many quarters and taken various practical developments. It has sometimes seemed as if the wave of reaction from a preceding period of indifference or of bitterness would carry forward the growing enthusiasm till it issued in a mighty stream bathing all the churches and flooding them by its onward flow.—*Rev. J. Tulloch, D.D.*

[16334] The ground of all living unity amongst men is Christ, and there is no other ground. He is the centre which, when we touch, all our enmity is broken and our discords healed. Alienations, divisions, jealousies, fall away from His peaceful presence. When we really come into His presence, we find ourselves at one not only with Him but with our brethren, who are also His brethren. The spring of this union is spiritual, and only spiritual.—*Ibid.*

[16335] Christian union is not merely a union in Christ as a common spiritual centre, but it is such a union as subsists between God the Father and the Son. Now, this union of Divine Persons in the Godhead—whatever else it may be—is a perfect consonance of will and affection, so that the Father hath evermore delight in the Son, and the Son in the Father. It must be, therefore, a unity of heart with heart, and will with will, and so a union, characteristically, of action, for all affection is already action. This is the lowest conception we can form of Christian union; but at the same time it is the highest. For whatever may be higher in the unity of Christ with God, and of Christians with Christ and with one another, we can only believe that this arises from its greater spiritual secrecy—its more profound mystery of spiritual truth.—*Ibid.*

[16336] Whenever we touch the life of Divine love and self-sacrifice that is in Christ, the hard and selfish heart melts away. The enthusiasm of humanity—of a common brotherhood in humanity—kindles within us at the quickening touch. The love of self dies down, or is no

longer an absorbing passion consuming our higher and better feelings. The love of Christ constrains us; "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."—*Ibid.*

[16337] The least drop of water hath the nature of its element, hath the entire properties of it, partakes of the round figure of that element, and best agrees with, and unites itself to water. In like manner it is with fire, and the rest of the elements, being homogeneous bodies, every part doth participate of the name and nature of the whole, shuns what is contrary to that nature, and most willingly gathers itself to that which is of the same kind. So it is with the true members of that mystical body whereof Christ is the Head; such is the union, unanimity, association, and fellowship of the people of God one amongst another, that they cannot suffer themselves to be combined with wicked persons and unbelievers; no, they will associate unto themselves none, by their good wills, who are not endowed with grace and goodness, and a godly conversation, being the true qualities and marks of that true Church whereof they themselves are true members.—*Spencer.*

[16338] Here is the unity foretold by the prophet Jeremiah: "I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever." Here is the unity seen in Apostolic days: "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." Here is the unity that still exists. Beneath all the strife that sin hath introduced into Christian churches, beneath all the dissensions that the enemy stirs up, is there not to be found amongst all true followers of the Lamb an underlying principle of real, genuine love one to the other; a love that not seldom has overleaped all barriers of rank, education, variety of opinion; and so bound men together in the firmest ligaments of a heaven-taught charity? We have heard of two men, perfect strangers to each other, knowing not a word of each other's language, becoming firm friends, because each in evident sincerity could utter the word "Abba."—*Rev. G. Everard, M.A.*

[16339] The moment a man's heart touches the heart of Christ in living faith, he becomes, whether he knows it or not, the brother of every other, in heaven or on earth, who has come into the same relationship with Christ. Whoever is united to Christ is brother or sister to everybody else that is united to Him.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[16340] As we love Him who is our Head with a more burning, self-devoted love, we must in Him love His members. And love understands thoughts of love, although ill-expressed, and catches at thoughts of truth, though conveyed in broken words and but half uttered, and reads the heart with which it sympathizes, and can even open to it, its own undeveloped meaning, or what it should mean, instead of being itself

repelled by its rude or imperfect speech. As we love our Lord more, we shall love more all whom He loves, and as we love more we shall understand one another better. One grain of love avails more than many pounds of controversy. —*Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D.*

[16341] When the clay is removed in the case of an ordinary tree the graft is found united to the stock, so when faith is swallowed up in sight, then the perfect union of Christ and His people is seen. Heaven has not to begin, but only to perfect, the living intercourse of believers with Christ and with each other. While on earth they were all grafted into one stock. They were all one in Christ, who has said, "Neither pray I for those alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." —*Prof. Balfour.*

[16342] We think much of our Thames; the inhabitants of Egypt, of the Nile; the Hindoo, of the Ganges; the German, of the Rhine; the American, of the St. Lawrence. But go down to the ocean. Ask it, "Where are these rivers?" And could it answer, it would say, "I know no Thames; I know no Rhine; I know no Nile; they are all lost in the ocean." So the distinctions of sects, &c., are but rivers, which will be lost in the ocean of heaven's bliss. There is but one heaven. —*Anon.*

## VI. ITS SUPREME BLESSEDNESS.

[16343] The liberty sought by worldly men in exemption from external restraints can be realized only by union with that Pattern Man who attained the true freedom. The conformity of man's will to the will of Him, in whose pattern man was moulded, is that normal state of tranquillity and happiness after which unregenerate humanity is vainly yearning. For God's "service is perfect freedom," and "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

[16344] Union with God in Christ wraps up every blessing. You cannot go beyond this. It is the *summum bonum*, containing all, and more than all, that heart can desire, or imagination can fathom. Does it contain the privilege of access to God—of pouring out our hearts to Him at all times, of casting our burden upon Him? No doubt the being united with God must involve this privilege, but it goes beyond it. Parties so united as to become one must, as a matter of course, have the privilege of opening their hearts one to another; from this closeness of union that privilege flows. Again, does union with God involve the privilege of hearing God's voice, of receiving from Him messages of comfort, guidance, light, counsel? It involves this also, but it goes beyond it. If I am one spirit with the Lord, it is absolutely certain,—it flows of necessity from this union,—that the Lord will address me ever and anon in accents

of direction, warning, and consolation. What means a spiritual union, if it does not involve at least this? —*Dean Goulburn.*

[16345] Mariners tell us that there are some parts of the sea where there is a strong current upon the surface going one way, but that down in the depths there is a strong current running in the other direction. Two seas do not meet and interfere with one another; but one stream of water on the surface is running in one direction, and another below is flowing from the opposite quarter. Now, here is a picture of Christian life; the Christian is like that. On the surface there is a stream of heaviness rolling with dark waves; but down in the depths there is a strong undercurrent of great rejoicing that is always flowing towards heaven. —*C. H. Spurgeon.*

[16346] As in mysterious and transcendent union the Divine takes into itself the human in the person of Jesus, and eternity is blended with time; we, trusting Him, and yielding our hearts to Him, receive into our poor lives an incorruptible seed, and for us the soul-satisfying realities that abide for ever mingle with and are reached through the shadows that pass away. —*A. Mactaren.*

[16347] As all the salt in the sea cannot make the fish salt, so evil influence cannot destroy the true life of a Christian.

[16348] To be in Christ, is to be safe in life and death, in time and in eternity; to be out of Christ, is to stand exposed every hour to the most appalling danger; to be in Christ, is to be in a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; to be out of Christ, is to stand defenceless before that storm which will, ere long, burst forth to consume His adversaries, and to sweep away every refuge of lies; to be in Christ, is to be reconciled to God, pardoned and accepted; to be out of Christ, is to be at enmity with God, guilty and condemned; to be in Christ, is to be adopted into God's family, as children, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; to be out of Christ, is to be aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise—without Christ, and therefore without God, and without hope in the world; to be in Christ, is to be a new creature, renewed, sanctified, and made meet for glory; to be out of Christ, is to be dead in trespasses and sins, polluted in our own blood; to be in Christ, is to be prepared for death, and judgment, and eternity; to be out of Christ, is to have nothing but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. —*J. Buchanan, D.D.*

[16349] Since I have attained to a clear consciousness, by inward experience, that there is no way of satisfying the needs of the soul or tranquillizing the heart's longings but by the inner life in Christ—aspiration after eternal blessedness, and consequent direction of the

mind and all its powers toward God—I am aware of an increase of power for the work of my calling, whatever it be, and of joy and spirit in performing it.—*Bunsen*.

# VII. THE MORAL EFFECTS OF A LIFE OF FELLOWSHIP AND COMMUNION WITH GOD.

As displayed in the walk and conversation of a Christian.

[16350] We know how men feel and act when they come to die; they discharge their worldly affairs from their minds, and try to realize the unseen state. Then this world is nothing to them. It may praise, it may blame; but they feel it not. They are leaving their goods, their deeds, their sayings, their writings, their names, behind them; and they care not for it, for they wait for Christ. To one thing alone they are alive, His coming; they watch against it, if so be they may then be found without shame. Such is the conduct of dying men; and what all but the very hardened do at the last, if their senses fail not and their powers hold, that does the true Christian all life long. He is ever dying while he lives; he is on his bier, and the prayers for the sick are saying over him. He has no work but that of making his peace with God, and preparing for the judgment. He has no aim but that of being found worthy to escape the things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man. And therefore day by day he unlearns the love of this world, and the desire of its praise; he can bear to belong to the nameless family of God, and to seem to the world strange in it and out of place, for so he is.—*Cardinal Newman*.

[16351] As the Christian's conversation is in heaven, as it is his duty, with Enoch and other saints, to walk with God, so his voice is in heaven, his heart "inditing of a good matter," of prayers and praises. Prayers and praises are the mode of his intercourse with the next world, as the converse of business or recreation is the mode in which this world is carried on in all its separate courses. He who does not pray does not claim his citizenship with heaven, but lives, though an heir of the kingdom, as if he were a child of earth. Now, it is not surprising if that duty or privilege, which is the characteristic token of our heavenly inheritance, should also have an especial influence upon our fitness for claiming it. He who does not use a gift, loses it; the man who does not use his voice or limbs, loses power over them, and becomes disqualified for the state of life to which he is called. In like manner, he who neglects to pray, not only suspends the enjoyment, but is in a way to lose the possession, of his Divine citizenship. We are members of another world; we have been severed from the companionship of devils, and brought into that invisible kingdom of Christ which faith alone discerns—that mysterious Presence of God which encompasses us, which

is in us, and around us, which is in our heart, which enfolds us as though with a robe of light, hiding our scarred and discoloured souls from the sight of Divine purity, and making them shine as the angels, and which flows in upon us too by means of all forms of beauty and grace which this visible world contains, in a starry host or (if I may so say) a milky way of Divine companions, the inhabitants of Mount Zion, where we dwell. Faith, I say, alone apprehends all this; but yet there *is* something which is not left to faith—our own tastes, likings, motives, and habits. Of these we are conscious in our degree, and we can make ourselves more and more conscious; and as consciousness tells us what they are, reason tells us whether they are such as become, as correspond with, that heavenly world into which we have been translated.—*Ibid*.

[16352] That is the true and effectual regeneration when the seed of life takes root in man and thrives. Such men have accustomed themselves to speak to God, and God has ever spoken to them; and they feel "the powers of the world to come" as truly as they feel the presence of this world, because they have been accustomed to speak and act as if it were real. All of us must rely on something; all must look up to, admire, court, make themselves one with something. Most men cast in their lot with the visible world; but true Christians with saints and angels. Such men are little understood by the world because they are not of the world; and hence it sometimes happens that even the better sort of men are often disconcerted and vexed by them. It cannot be otherwise; they move forward on principles, so different from what are commonly assumed as true. They take for granted, as first principles, what the world wishes to have proved in detail. They have become familiar with the sights of the next world, till they talk of them as if all men admitted them.—*Ibid*.

[16353] There are two types of character in the world, with which you are familiar enough. I find no single word to mark them, but shall try to describe each. The one is masculine; full of insight, reading motives, penetrating plans and results, skilful to plot and scheme. It has the wisdom of the serpent, the understanding of a man. Active, too; delighting in "push" and business; its hands full, hurrying and energetic. It despises quiet, laughs at the simple, and has no time for sentiment. The other finds its emblem in the dove. It is credulous and unsuspecting; shrinks, and is reserved. You never hear its voice, for it is soft and timid; but it has a heart to feel and to bear. Try it where the passive virtues of endurance and meekness shine, and it will toil and sacrifice and suffer with the unconscious simplicity of a child and the silent heroism of a martyr. It is the character typified in childhood, and continued in the higher forms of womanliness. The one of these types of character schemes where the



other trusts ; the one is wise, the other harmless ; the one is given to work, the other to prayer ; the one is masculine, the other childlike. Both the manliness and the gentleness blend in

“The grand old name of gentleman,”

and they blend also in true Christian character, for every Christian should be, potentially at least, a gentleman.—*O. Dykes, D.D.*

#### VIII. HOMILETICAL APPLICATIONS.

[16354] This life of which such glorious things are spoken comes not naturally to any man. Thousands idly hear of it, dream of it, sigh for it, for one who sets himself to seek, to cherish, to confess it. Beware of that languid indolent assent, which regulates the attainment of it into some distant region, of past or future, with which the present, our only possession, has neither contact nor commerce. If there be such a thing as the hidden life, then are we dead men without it—dead, not like St. Paul, to this life of time, but dead to that only life which is indeed eternal.—*Rev. F. Fergusson, D.D.*

[16355] It will draw you very near your Saviour, if every day, every morning, you think, Now, here is something to set right by the help of the Holy Spirit : I am turning cold-hearted and indeavour ; I am growing worldly again, and self-seeking : I am growing envious, suspicious, harsh of temper, hasty of speech : I am growing careworn, depressed, unthankful. All that must be changed : O Blessed Saviour, give Thy Spirit to change it ! And then the solid comfort of feeling, if we could but really feel, that all the worries, all the petty sordid vexations which come of dealings with impracticable, wrong-

headed, stupid, dishonest people, all the growing weariness, and the blank dissatisfaction, and the gleam gone from this world, are God's discipline to work the higher inner health and life and prosperity. Even in seasons of despondency, deep almost as Elijah's, what a true help, just to cling to this one thing, and hold it tight in the darkness, that God has sent this. This is what I need : let His Blessed Spirit make it do what He intended. If in any good measure we succeed in attaining this, then, in so doing, we have transferred our true interest and our soul's portion from this outer worldly scene, with its innumerable accidents and mischances, never to be quite guarded against, and from whose reach not even God's own people (though loved of Him) are free ; to that serener inner region where there are no mischances ; where it may be all prosperity, all growth, all increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end. We have got away from the strifes and storms of time, into the calm of eternity : we have turned from the seen to the unseen : we have set our true life where it is no longer at the mercy of a thousand outward contingencies, but where it is “hid with Christ in God.”—*Boyd.*

[16356] The gate is open. “Come unto me” is the inscription without—“Sin no more” the watchword within : rest of heart and soul, peace amidst trouble, strength in weakness, life in death, shall be yours on the instant : safety still, eternal life still, when flesh and heart fail you : a course like that of the light which goes on and illuminates unto a perfect day ; at last, that rest which remaineth and is no more broken—a home where Christ is, and, with Him, quietness and assurance for ever.—*Dean Vaughan.*

## PART IV.

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### RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(Continued).

#### DIVISION I.

#### *THE ULTIMATE AWARDS, OR THE FOUR LAST THINGS.*

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# RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(Continued).

## DIVISION I.

### THE ULTIMATE AWARDS, OR THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

#### DEATH.

##### I. THE MUTABILITY OF ALL THINGS.

Every form and state of life is subject to the inroads of time, the uncertainty of life, and the revolutions of change.

[16357] What exhibitions various hath the world

Witness'd of mutability in all  
That we account most durable below !  
Change is the diet on which all subsist,  
Created changeable, and change at last  
Destroys them.—*Cowper*.

[16358] The world which we inhabit is a chequered scene. Everything around us is changed or changing into some new form. It is so in nature ; seed-time and harvest—cold and heat—summer and winter—day and night—regularly succeed each other. The oaks of the forest as well as the flowers of the field—the heavens as well as the earth—the works of art as well as the works of nature—are subject to perpetual revolution. So emphatically true, as well as inimitably beautiful and sublime, is the poet's description—

" The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherits, shall dissolve,  
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,  
Leave not a wreck behind."

—*Gems of Thought*.

[16359] My life is a frail life, a corruptible life, a life which, the more it increaseth the more it decreaseth, the farther it goeth the nearer it cometh to death ; a deceitful life, and like a shadow, full of the snares of death. Now I rejoice, now I languish ; now I flourish, now infirm ; now I live, and straight I die ; now I seem happy, always miserable ; now I laugh, now I weep ; thus all things are so subject to mutability that nothing continueth an hour in one estate. Oh, joy above joy, exceeding all joy, without which there is no joy, when shall I enter into thee, that I may see my God that dwelleth in thee.—*Augustine*.

[16360] Even the ashes of the commonest household fire are melancholy things, for they remind us of what was once bright, and suggest thoughts of loss and ruin, with which our sad experience of life's changes enables us to sympathize. More melancholy still are the brown withered leaves of autumn, blown by the chill November winds about our paths ; the ashes of Nature's gorgeous funeral pyre, in which the pomp and glory of the summer burnt itself out ; each of which tells us of a miracle of beauty and design, and a life of gladness which have perished for ever. We mourn for the awful waste that goes on in the world, the extinction of species, the myriads of seeds that never germinate, of blossoms that fall in their perfection, and of fruits that never set or ripen. But there is no waste in nature equal to the waste of human life.—*H. Macmillan*.

##### II. THE INEVITABLENESS, UNIVERSALITY, AND REASONABLENESS OF DEATH.

" It is appointed unto men once to die "  
(Heb. ix. 27).

[16361] The lightest heart, the least thoughtful mind, has no disbelief of death. The distance of the dark cloud in which he comes, sailing through the bosom of futurity, may be miscalculated ; but the world unhesitatingly owns he is coming, and will at last be here. In almost every other particular of existence the fortunes of men differ ; but to die is common to all. The stream of life runs in a thousand various channels, but run where it will—brightly or darkly, smoothly or languidly—it is stopped by Death. Though invisible, he is always abroad on the earth. The trees drop their leaves at the approach of the winter's frost ; man falls at the presence of death. Every successive generation he claims for his own, and his claim is never denied. To die is the condition on which we hold life ; rebellion sickens with hopelessness at the thought of resisting death ; the very hope of the most desperate is not that death may be escaped, but that he is eternal ; and all that the young, the careless, and the dissipated attempt is to think



of him as seldom as they can. No man, therefore, will deny that whatever can be said of death is applicable to himself. The bell that he hears tolled may never toll for him; there may be no friend or children left to lament him; he may not have to lie through long and anxious days, looking for the coming of the expected terror; but he knows that he must die; he knows that in whatever quarter of the world he abides—whatever be his circumstances—however strong his present hold of life—however unlike the prey of death he looks—that it is his doom beyond reverse to die.—*Steebing*.

[16362] If death were only contingent, and not certain, yet, because it might happen, it ought to make us very careful and solicitous. If God should say that only one of all those in the world should die, but did not declare who that one were, yet all would fear. Why, then, dost thou not now fear, when all men must infallibly die, and perhaps thou the first?—*Bp Taylor*.

[16363] It is no more wonderful to die than to live; to undergo the change called death, than the change effected at birth. Man exists before he is born, and unless some of his deepest instincts are fallacious as ever oracle of old, ceases not to be when he expires. Death is but a kind of second birth; the close of an embryo state of being, and the commencement of a new and more enlarged existence. It is the last of the physical changes incessantly taking place in our vital material frame, all of which are in the eye of philosophy alike mysterious and incomprehensible.—*W. B. Chulow*.

[16364] Death is the removal of an outgrowth after it has accomplished its functions and become a hindrance,—the outward bark of the tree become dry, and scaling off that the tree may expand with more thrift and freedom. Death is a necessary stage in human progress, of which the lower analogies prophesy in strains of joy.—*E. H. Sears, D.D.*

[16365] We can as well stop the chariot of the sun when posting to-night, and chase away the shadows of the evening, as escape this hour of darkness that is coming upon us. A man may escape the wars by pleading privilege of years, or weakness of body, or the king's protection, or by sending another in his room; but in this war the press is so strict, that it admits no dispensation, young or old, weak or strong, willing or unwilling—all's one, into the field we must go, and look that last and most dreadful enemy in the face. 'Tis in vain to think of sending another in our room, for no man dieth by proxy; or to think of compounding with death, as those self-deluding fools did (Isa. xxviii. 15) who thought they had been discharged of the debt by feigning the sergeant. No, no, there is no discharge in that war. Suppose a man were sitting upon a throne of majesty, surrounded with armed guards, or in the midst of a college of expert and learned physicians, death will pass all these

guards to deliver thee the fatal message; neither can art help thee when nature itself gives thee up.—*Flavel*.

[16366] Common as life is, death, its counterpart, though less apparent, is not less common. As if it were the shadow which life casts upon the ground, there, along with it, goes that dark, unsocial, dumb companion. For though not coeval, death is coexistent with life; so that wherever you find the one in this world, you find the other.—*T. Guthrie, D.D.*

[16367] The seeds of corruption lie too deep in the human vitals to be destroyed by anything but the immortality which the gospel sets before us.—*Gems of Thought*.

[16368] It is not less natural for the old to die than for the fields to mellow in autumn, or for the fruit when ripe to fall from the tree. And who would repine that the weary pilgrim reaches his journey's end—that the worn-out traveller gets to a resting-place—or that the mariner, after a long and boisterous voyage, gains a haven of perpetual repose?—*Ibid.*

[16369] So have I seen the pillars of a building, assisted with artificial props, bending under the pressure of a roof, and pertinaciously resisting the infallible and prepared ruin.

"Donec certa dies, omni compage soluta,  
Ipsam cum rebus subruat auxilium;"

"till the determined day comes, and then the burden sunk on the pillars, and disordered the aids and auxiliary rafters into a common ruin and a ruder grave;" so are the desires and weak arts of man; with little aids and assistances of care and physic, we strive to support our decaying bodies, and to put off the evil day; but quickly that day will come, and then neither angels nor men can rescue us from our grave.—*Bp. Taylor*.

[16370] We are all hastening to one meeting-place. You who are on the mountain-top yonder, golden with the light of the morning; you who are in the dark, dank, wet valley, where the trees are dripping and the road is steep; you who are walking through garden land, beautiful and flowery and fragrant; you who are knee-deep in snow, or are going through the arid burning desert sand;—we shall all come face to face at one solemn rendezvous! Are we prepared for that death? We cannot escape it. I know you are young and strong and stalwart, and defiant in many a mood. But death will have you! He will blanch your ruddy cheek, extinguish the fire of your eye, and say to the heart, Stand still!—*J. Parker, D.D.*

[16371] "It is appointed unto men once to die;" and the sun, the seasons, the tides, and the orbs of heaven no more truly keep to their ordained appointments than we must keep appointment with death.—*J. Graham*.

[16372] Ordinary life is calm, calculating,

considerate, and it is to ordinary life that death is terrible. It is the thought of death that is terrible, not death. Death is gentle, peaceful, painless; instead of bringing suffering, it brings an end of suffering. It is misery's cure. Where death is, agony is not. The processes of death are all friendly. The near aspect of death is gracious. There is a picture somewhere of a frightful face, livid and ghastly, which the beholder gazes on with horror, and would turn away from, but for a hideous fascination that not only rivets his attention, but draws him closer to it. On approaching the picture the hideousness disappears, and when directly confronted with it is not any more seen; the face is the face of an angel. It is a picture of death, and the object of the artist was to impress the idea that the terror of death is an apprehension. Theodore Parker, whose observation of death was very large, has said that he never saw a person of any belief, condition or experience, unwilling to die when the time came. Death is an ordinance of nature, and like every ordinance of nature if directed by beneficent laws to beneficent ends. What must be is made welcome. Necessity is beautiful.—*O. Frothingham.*

[16373] It is as natural to die as to be born; and to a little infant, perhaps, the one is as painful as the other.—*Sir F. Bacon.*

### III. IMPORT OF DEATH TO MAN AS AN APPOINTED DOOM.

1 It extends to the entire man, and to every part of his nature.

[16374] Obviously death must be very different in the view of the materialist, who regards man as only a higher species of animal, whose mental and moral distinctions are the result of a higher physical organization, and in the judgment of those who consider man as a possessor of a soul distinct from the body, the subject and seat of a higher nature. If the body be the whole of man, death is the end of his conscious existence. If he consist of body and spirit, death may prove but his birthday into another or more important state of being. Now this point, which till the present hour has proved too hard for man himself to clear up, Scripture decides conclusively for all who will receive its testimony. Man is both body and spirit, the first placing him in communion with the outward world, the second allying him to God and His spiritual creation. Now it was against man in his entirety that the threatening was directed, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die." Beyond doubt the outward man perisheth, and surely the inner man, the subject of that sin of which the body is but the instrument, cannot have escaped the force of the dread sentence. God's word assures us that the soul that sinneth it shall die. Nay, it speaks of man as already dead who yet lives in the body; dead, therefore, spiritually. And while whoso loveth his brother has passed from death unto life, he that hateth

his brother abideth in death. These Scriptures, while they distinguish between bodily and spiritual death, represent both as included in the sentence, and threatened and executed against the sinner.—*Ibid.*

2 It exerts its influence upon the body and the spirit severally and together.

[16375] It is not unimportant to observe that there is in actual death itself no extinction of existence or annihilation either of the body or the spirit. For a time the body retains its form, and its substance, however changed, is never lost. Much more may it be presumed shall the spirit survive. The after effects of death upon the body itself are a matter of common observation; it quickly turns comeliness into corruption, and finally reduces form and structure into shapeless dust. The effect of bodily death on the spirit of the man whose nature is thus divided it may be more difficult to estimate. This may depend in part on the value of the earthly portion he has lost, and partly on the future portion on which he has entered, but it cannot be indifferent either to the subject of grace any more than to the heir of this world whom it has stripped of his whole inheritance of good. While we look on the deserted and impassive corpse and say, "It is all over with him now," the disembodied spirit must still find itself the subject of a maimed and imperfect nature. Consciousness belongs to its nature, and must endure while it has being. Its proper life lies in the harmony and subjection of its powers and dispositions to the nature and will of God; its death in contrariety and enmity to Him. This involves the disruption of a holy and dutiful relation to the Father of spirits, and, by inevitable consequence, a deprivation of the fruits of His love and favour, on which life and blessedness depend.—*Ibid.*

[16376] The soul will not easily part with the body, but disputes the passages with death from member to member (like resolute soldiers in a stormed garrison) till at last it is forced to yield up the fort royal into the hands of victorious death, and leave the dearly beloved body a captive to it.—*Flavel.*

### IV. THE ORDER AND PROCESS BY WHICH THE WORK OF DEATH IS CONSUMMATED.

Though incurred instantaneously on the act of transgression, its effects follow by successive stages, and at several more or less distant intervals.

[16377] As caused by sin, the spiritual man, as the proper subject and source of the evil, first feels the power of death. Its very touch intercepts all happy intercourse with a holy God. This was felt and seen on the day that Adam sinned. His fear and flight at the voice of the Lord God in the garden was the unmistakable symptom of a soul already dead in sin, which dared not live with God, while his expulsion from God's

presence marked no less clearly that God had ceased to live with him. Thus was executed to the letter the word which God had spoken, "*In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die.*"—*Rev. J. Henderson.*

[16378] The disruption of the creature's relation to God, it may well be conceived, must introduce disorder into all the relations and interests of its being; nor, unless with a view to some ulterior design of signal judgment or of more signal mercy, might its full development and consummation be long delayed. But in subserviency to this end does man live on in the body for a season, though as to God, he is dead while he liveth. Yet it is but for a little time. Whatever be the result of this day of forbearance, the work of death goes on; "the body is dead because of sin"—the mortal crisis which awaits every individual man in his own time. As distinguished from spiritual, it is called temporal death, as superadding exclusion from the things of earth and time to the loss of all happy interest in God.—*Ibid.*

[16379] There remains but one further stage ere death reach its complete and final issue, both in the individual and the race. When the designs of the Divine administration in our world are finished the bodies of all who sleep in dust shall be reorganized. While the just, by faith through grace, shall be raised to life incorruptible and glorious, the unjust, impenitent, and unbelieving shall awake to the resurrection of damnation. The whole man shall go away from the glory and joy of God's presence into everlasting punishment. This is the second death.—*Ibid.*

## V. ITS NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS.

x Death is the separation between the soul and the body; stealthy in its approach and mysterious in its action.

[16380] Three things may be considered in it:—1. The separation of the soul from the body. Hereby the act of infusing the living soul ceaseth unto all its ends; for as a principle of life unto the whole, it operates only by virtue of its union with the subject to be quickened by it. 2. A cessation of all vital actings in the quickened subject; for that union from whence they should proceed is dissolved. 3. As a consequent of these, there is in the body an impotency for, and an ineptitude unto, all vital operations. Not only do all operations of life actually cease, but the body is no more able to effect them. There remains in it, indeed, "potentia obedientialis," a "passive power" to receive life again, if communicated unto it by an external efficient cause—so the body of Lazarus, being dead, had a receptive power of a living soul—but an active power to dispose itself to life or vital actions it hath not.—*J. Owen, D.D.*

[16381] Death is a very dissolution, a loosing

the cement the soul and body are held together with. Which two, as a frame or fabric, are compinginate at first; and after, as the timber from the lime, or the lime from the stone, so are they broken in sunder again.—*Bp. Andrewes.*

[16382] Is death uncertain? therefore be thou fixed;

Fixed as a sentinel,—all eye, all ear,  
All expectation of the coming foe.—*Young.*

[16383] The pain of dying must be distinguished from the pain of the previous disease, for when life ebbs, sensibility declines. As death is the final extinction of corporeal feelings, so numbness increases as death comes on. The prostration of disease, like healthful fatigue, engenders a growing stupor—a sensation of subsiding softly into a coveted repose.—*Anon.*

[16384] What is that which we call to die? To go out like a light, and in a sweet trance to forget ourselves and all the passing phenomena of the day, as we forget the phantoms of a fleeting dream; to form, as in a dream, new connexions with God's world; to enter into a more exalted sphere, and to make a new step up man's graduated ascent of creation.—*Zschobke.*

[16385] The one human being whom we have loved best upon earth—the parent, the husband, the wife, the child—lies before us. We see what is coming. It is very gradual, perhaps, and there are many rallies in which vital power struggles with disease, in which hope flickers up in its contest with the presentiments of reason, only to die back into a deeper despair. It is very gradual—a slow processional movement to the grave; but the end comes at last. At last a day comes to which the preceding days are as if they had not been; a day comes which lives in memory. We can no longer reckon on hours; we dare not be away even for a few minutes, lest we should be too late. A change has taken place, which they know well who are familiar with death, and of which none can mistake the import. We feel, all feel, that the time is short, and a few words are said into which is compressed a life—its most sincere thought and love—a few assurances, messages, entreaties; no more is possible. Already, one by one, the vital powers take their leave: first speech, then movement, then hearing, then even eyesight. Still there is breathing, now rapid and deep, now weaker and intermittent; and then there comes a last breath; and we wait; and there is none after it. It lies before us, that loved form: only an hour ago it spoke: we speak to it now, but in vain. We bend over it in our agony, as if it was still what it had been; but we know—what would we not give to escape from our conviction?—that neither thought nor feeling tenants it now. And the question must rise then, if it never rose before, with an urgency proportioned to the grief which asks it—Is all really over? Has the real being, which one short hour ago thought and felt so



keenly, actually and for ever ceased to be?—*Canon Liddon.*

[16386] If, when the connection with matter is dissolved, an immediate consciousness is to be had of the Divine presence, there can be no more room left for mixed or ambiguous moral sentiments. The spirit, quick throughout with the feeling of good and evil, is surrounded on every side with the great object of all such feelings: even as the mote that swims in the brightness of the upper skies is encompassed with the effulgence of the noon. To die, is to burst upon the blaze of Uncreated Light, and to be sensitive to its beams—and to nothing else!—*I. Taylor.*

## 2 Death is the universal condition of life.

[16387] The Christian teaching, that death means life, and more abundant life, sounds like a paradox. But, if it be a paradox, it is not peculiar to the Christian Faith. Throughout the universe, life is conditioned by death, and every advance in life implies and necessitates death. Nothing can live save as it extracts nourishment from air, or water, or earth, or from vegetable and animal tissues, by a process which involves the decomposition of that on which it feeds. A thousand good creatures of God die every year that I may live; and that I may grow, I myself am for ever dying in a thousand different forms. Processes of waste and reparation, of loss and gain, of destruction and reconstruction, are essential to all life, and to all advance in life. That which we commonly call "death" is but the last visible gradation of a series which no man can number; and as all previous deaths are conditions of life, so also, so pre-eminently, is the last. To die, to fling off "this muddy vesture of decay," is to enter into larger, happier conditions, in which psychical processes and developments take the place of physical; in which we shall live after the spirit, not after the flesh: in which, that is, the highest kind of life we have attained here will move onward and upward towards its ultimate perfection.—*S. Cox, D.D.*

## VI. ITS AWFULNESS.

Death is Nature's supreme evil—God's earliest curse and man's greatest dread.

[16388] Death is, in itself, a most distressing event. The whole creation shrinks from its approach. The scenes from which it excludes—the relations which it dissolves—the friends which it separates—the unknown world to which it leads—all conspire to render it awful, and excite strong emotions, even in the stoutest heart.—*Gems of Thought.*

[16389] The artificial gaiety, which has occasionally played the comedian about the dying bed of "philosophy, falsely so called," is an outrage upon decency and nature. Death destroys both action and enjoyment—mocks at wisdom, strength, and beauty—disarranges our

plans—robs us of our treasure—desolates our bosoms—breaks our heart-strings—blasts our hopes. Death extinguishes the glow of kindness—abolishes the most tender relations of man—severs him from all he knows and loves—subjects him to an ordeal, which thousands of millions have passed, but none can explain; and which will be as new to the last who gives up the ghost as it was to murdered Abel—flings him, in fine, without any avail from the experience of others, into a state of untried being. No wonder that Nature trembles before it; reason justifies the fear; religion never makes light of it; and he who does, instead of ranking with heroes, can hardly deserve to rank with a brute.—*Ibid.*

[16390] God gave unto man his senses and other parts of his body double; He gave him two eyes, that if one failed, he might serve himself with the other; He gave him two hands, that if one were lost, yet he might not wholly be disabled; but of deaths He gave but one, and if that one miscarry, all is ruined. A terrible case, that the thing which most imports us, which is to die, hath neither trial, experience, nor remedy! It is but only once to be acted, and that in an instant, and on that instant all eternity depends; in which, if we fail, the error is never to be amended.—*Ep. Taylor.*

[16391] No one who looks on death in itself, and does not consider it as overcome by Christ, can require any proof that death is an enemy. Coming into households and filling them with mourning, marring the might and withering the beauty of men, snatching away the wise in the midst of their searchings after knowledge, and the useful ere they have half perfected their benevolent plans, what enemy is so destructive, so inveterate as death? What conqueror ever made such ravages? Whose progress ever caused so much terror and wretchedness? Witness the tears of widows and orphans; witness the mourning of a nation; witness the anguish of those who are thrown without a protector on the world; witness the racking pains which attend the "taking down of the earthly house of this tabernacle;" witness the dishonour of the grave; clothe it how you may, adorn it how you may, with the marshalled pomp and the mighty gathering, still the body, with all its exquisite symmetries and curious organs, turning to corruption. Oh, death, thou art indeed an enemy. Never did foe work such fearful injuries, such, to all appearance, irreparable wrongs. And if, further, we think on another state of being, and consider that death, by detaching soul from body, sends the immortal part to the judgment seat of God, cutting off all opportunities of repentance—consigning the sinful to everlasting torment—verily, if we have an enemy that enemy is death, and no language can exaggerate this enemy's awfulness.—*H. Melville, B.D.*

[16392] Death! thou art a hammer that

always strikes, a sword that is never blunt, a net into which all fall, a prison into which all enter, a sea on which all must venture, a penalty which all must suffer, and a tribute which all must pay. Oh, cruel death! thou carriest off in an hour, in a moment, that which has been acquired with the labour of many years, and fillest the world with orphans; joimest the end to the beginning without any intermediate space.—*Luis de Granada.*

[16393] For man, death has a significance unknown in all the inferior regions of the Creation. The creatures play under its shadow; man alone shrinks and shudders. Death is an unknown factor in the careless life of the Creation; it is a ruling factor, perhaps the ruling factor in the natural life of man. There is little need to hand the skeleton round at our banquets: it haunts the secret chamber of every heart. It closes every vista; it rounds every pleasure; it casts a chilling shadow over life's sunniest passages; it lends a passionate sadness to passionate love. All the philosophies have spent their strength in trying to rob it of its terror, and to banish it to the background; in vain, it evades them, and plants itself in the foreground of every life.—*Baldwin Brown.*

[16394] Sure 'tis a serious thing to die, my soul!

What a strange moment must it be, when near Thy journey's end!—thou hast the grief in view—

That awful gulf, no mortal e'er repass'd  
To tell what's doing on the other side.  
Nature runs back, and shudders at the sight.  
And every liestring bleeds at thought of parting;

For part they must—body and soul must part;  
Fond couple; link'd more close than wedded pair;

This wings its way to its Almighty source,  
The witness of its actions, now its judge;  
That drops into the dark and noisome grave,  
Like a disabled pitcher, of no use.

Death's thousand doors stand open.  
If there's an hereafter,  
And that there is, conscience, uninfluenced,  
And suffer'd to speak out, tells every man,  
Then it must be an awful thing to die!—*Blair.*

[16395] Other wastes may be repaired. Every spring, the earth rises in fresh loveliness from the baptism of the autumnal fire. It passes out through winter's dark valley of the shadow of death, into green pastures and beside still waters beyond. The leaves appear again in the old tenderness; and out of the dry bulbs and withered-looking branches come the fair young flowers wearing the immortal bloom of Eden. But, what shall repair the waste of human death? Can any following spring revive the ashes of the urn? Spring lays its magic wand upon the green mound of the churchyard, as Gehazi laid the prophet's staff upon the face of

the dead child; but, while the lower lives on the surface of the mound, that come there and show the sympathy of nature, rise out of their sleep at the touch—the grass roots sending forth their green blades, and the daisies opening their round eyes in wonderment—there is no response from the precious dust beneath. Ashes to ashes and dust to dust still maintain their physical connection.—*H. Macmillan.*

## VII. ITS JEALOUSY.

Death is oftentimes licensed to dethrone a beloved idol of the soul, when it comes between God and man.

[16396] Take aught but THAT—the dearest thing of all,

O Death, be merciful! On me let fall  
Thy dread intent!

But Death replied: "Solved may not be the spell,  
Yet, even now, *hadst thou not loved TOO WELL*  
I would relent.

—*A. M. A. W.*

## VIII. ITS IMPARTIALITY.

[16397] Death will, like hail and rain, fall on the best gardens, as well as the wide wilderness. The wheat is cut down and carried into the barn as well as the tares. A godly man is free from the sting, but not from the stroke, from the curse, but not from the cross, of death. Holy Hezekiah could beg his own life for a few years, but not compound for his death; he did obtain a reprieve for fifteen years, but not a pardon.—*G. Swinnock.*

[16398] Death comes equally to us all, and makes us all equal, when it comes. The ashes of an oak in a chimney are no epitaph of that, to tell me how high or how large that was; it tells me not what flocks it sheltered while it stood, nor what men it hurt when it fell. The dust of great persons' graves is speechless too; it says nothing, it distinguishes nothing. As soon the dust of a wretch whom thou wouldst not, as of a prince whom thou couldst not look upon, will trouble thine eyes, if the wind blow it thither; and when the whirlwind hath blown the dust of the churchyard into the church, and the man sweeps out the dust of the church into the churchyard, who will undertake to sift those dusts again, and to pronounce, "This is the patrician, this is the noble flour; this the yeoman, and this is the plebeian bran."—*J. Donne, D.D.*

[16399] One may live as a conqueror, a king, or a magistrate; but he must die as a man.—*D. Webster.*

[16400] That was an impressive admonition which the herald proclaimed to the corpse of the Emperor Constantine VII. before the procession moved towards the sepulchre: "Arise, O king of the world, and obey the summons of the King of kings."—*Dulce Domum.*

## IX. ITS ELOQUENCE.

Death is a mighty preacher, and his word is  
"with power."

[16401] We are too often prone to forget the admonitions of death because they are so unpleasant to the feelings of human nature ; but as often as we obliterate them by criminal neglect, or by worldly cares and enjoyments, he renews his labours, and he *will be heard*. Sometimes he speaks to us from the funeral procession, as it moves on in slow and solemn pace amidst the crowded populace, "Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets." Sometimes he calls from our neighbour's door, "Be ye also ready." Now, he enters even into our own families, and says to our breaking hearts, "Behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke." Anon he ascends the throne itself, and with a voice loud as thunder, utters his fearful warning to a whole nation, "Verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity!"—*Gems of Thought*.

[16402] Oh, eloquent, just, and mighty Death ! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded ; what none hath dared, thou hast done ; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised ; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of men, and covered them all over with these two narrow words, "Hic jacet."—*Sir W. Raleigh*.

## X. ITS CONSECRATION.

[16403] "Ere long," I thought,  
"Great Death will hallow all these flippant lips,  
And make each poor face awful. Truest tears  
Will not seem wasted when they fall on them."  
—*Anon*.

[16404] When Death strikes down the innocent and young, for every fragile form from which he lets the panting spirit free, a hundred virtues rise, in shapes of mercy, charity, and love, to walk the world and bless it. Of every tear that sorrowing mortals shed on such green graves, some good is born, some gentler nature comes.—*Dickens*.

[16405] "The blessed" is a phrase which we are so accustomed to apply to the dead, that it is well to remember that the thought of death being a state of blessedness was one which a heathen could not conceive. Even Achilles in the Elysian Fields declares that the life of the meanest drudge on earth is preferable to the very highest of the unsubstantial rewards of the underworld.—*J. B. Heard, M.A.*

[16406] The dead, how sacred ! sacred is the dust  
Of this heaven-labour'd form, erect, Divine !  
This heav'n-assumed majestic robe of earth,  
He deign'd to wear, who hung the vast expanse  
With azure bright, and clothed the sun in gold.  
—*Thomson*.

[16407] Thou art so fair,  
That, gazing on thee, clamorous grief becomes,  
For very reverence, mute. If mighty Death  
Made our rude human faces by his touch  
Divinely fair as thine, oh, never more  
Would strong hearts break o'er biers. There  
sleeps to-night  
A sacred sweetness on thy silent lips,  
A solemn light upon thy ample brow,  
That I can never, never hope to find  
Upon a living face.—*Smith*.

## XI. ITS REVELATIONS.

[16408] If two lords travel together on the road, their servants cannot easily be distinguished, especially if the servants of the one counterfeit the livery of the other ; but when they come to the parting way, then it is clearly known who belong to the one, and who to the other, for each then followeth his own master, waits on him to his house, stayeth and abideth there with him. So, though whilst men live, all professing themselves Christians, and most, for a show at least, putting on the livery of Christ, it is not known who belong to the Prince of life, and who to the prince of the powers of the air ; but death will discover it to themselves and the elect angels.—*G. Swinmole*.

[16409] There are marks by which saints and sinners may be distinguished whilst they live, as great men's servants are by the liveries that they wear ; but these characters, being most inward, and known to none but themselves, and the Lord they serve, it is their dying only that will reveal infallibly what they are, and to whom they belong.—*Ibid*.

[16410] The immortal life bursting from its mortal coverings reveals the angel from within if he be there, or reveals and releases the demon so far as demon principles rule in any man's breast. The moment death touches us we begin to change. Our show-work falls away, our true self appears, taking body and form according to its quality, and grows into the very effigy of its ruling hatreds and loves.—*E. H. Sears, D.D.*

[16411] It may be well supposed that, as the hour of death draws nigh, keener views will be obtained of the things of futurity. As that frail building, wherein the soul dwells, approaches nearer to its downfall, there are more chinks, so to speak, through which light may be admitted, and therefore, it may often come to pass that when man almost touches the boundary line between time and eternity, there are grand, vivid manifestations of the world of spirits ; that, before detached from the visible, he seems admitted into communion with the inhabitants of the invisible state. When the soul is struggling to get free she may show more than ever the nobility of her origin, sending out her scrutiny into those glorious domains wherein, by right of citizenship, lie her home and her heritage.—*H. Melville, B.D.*



[16412] When we have wound up our minds for any point of time, any great event, an interview with strangers, or the sight of some wonder, or the occasion of some unusual trial—when it comes and is gone, we have a strange reverse of feeling from our changed circumstances. Such, but without any mixture of pain, without any lassitude, dullness, or disappointment, may be the happy contemplation of the disembodied spirit; as if it said to itself, “So all is now over; this is what I have so long waited for; for which I have nerved myself; against which I have prepared, fasted, prayed, and wrought righteousness. Death is come and gone—it is over. Ah! is it possible? What an easy trial; what a cheap price for eternal glory! A few sharp sicknesses, or some acute pain awhile, or some few and evil years, or some struggles of mind, dreary desolateness for a season, fightings and fears, afflicting bereavements, or the scorn and ill-usage of the world—how they fretted me, how much I thought of them, yet how little really they are!”—*Cardinal Newman*.

## XII. ITS POWER.

[16413] Death traverses the world with unvaried steps; riches cannot bribe him—science cannot evade him—power cannot resist him. He regards not the gravity of age, nor pities the tenderness of youth; his presence is universal, and his sway is unlimited.—*Gems of Thought*.

[16414] Dense as the gloom is which hangs over the mouth of the sepulchre, it is the spot, above all others, where the gospel, if it enters, shines and triumphs. In the busy sphere of life and health it encounters an active antagonist; the world confronts it—aims to obscure its glories—to deny its claims—to drown its voice—to dispute its progress—to drive it from the ground it occupies. But from the mouth of the grave the world retires; it shrinks from the contest there; it leaves a clear and open space in which the gospel can assert its claims, and unveil its glories, without opposition or fear. There the infidel and the worldling look anxiously around; but the world has left them helpless, and fled. There the Christian looks around, and lo, the angel of mercy is standing close by his side. The gospel kindles a torch, which not only irradiates the valley of the shadow of death, but throws a radiance into the world beyond, and reveals it peopled with the sainted spirits of those who have died in Jesus.—*Rev. J. Harris, D.D.*

[16415] We have reason to believe that when we put off these bodies, and all the organs belonging to them, our perceptive powers shall rather be improved than destroyed or impaired. We have reason to believe that the Supreme Being perceives everything in a much more perfect manner than we do, without bodily organs. We have reason to believe that there are other created beings endowed with powers of percep-

tion more perfect, and more extensive than ours, without such organs as we find necessary. We ought not, therefore, to conclude that such bodily organs are in their own nature necessary to perception; but rather that by the will of God our power of perceiving external objects is limited and circumscribed by our organs of sense; so that we perceive objects in a certain manner, and in certain circumstances, and no other. If a man was shut up in a dark room so that he could see nothing but through one small hole in the shutter of a window, would he conclude that the hole was the cause of his seeing, and that it is impossible to see in any other way?—*Reid*.

## XIII. THE LIFE THAT PREPARES FOR DEATH.

A holy life is the only adequate preparation for a holy death.

[16416] Loosen yourselves from this body by degrees, as we do anything we would remove from a place where it sticks fast. Gather up your spirits into themselves. Teach them to look upon themselves as a distinct thing. Inure them to the thoughts of a dissolution. Be continually as taking leave. Cross and disprove the common maxim, and let your hearts, which they use to say are wont to die last, die first.—*J. Howe*.

[16417] What is human existence, even when protracted beyond its usual bounds? What is the human frame on which we so much depend? It may be considered, not as the imperishable monument, to stand for ages, but as a tabernacle or building raised for temporary convenience; made not of gold or silver, brass or stone, but of the dust of the ground, soon to be dissolved—not as the permanent oak, to outlive centuries, and withstand the wintry storms and raging tempests of successive years; but as the tender plant, deracinated by the slightest blast, or destroyed by the lightest foot—not as the rough and lasting production of the workman, that will bear the hardest shock, but as a delicate, soft, though beautiful, piece of mechanism, the slightest touch of which disorders all its wheels, and renders it at once useless. Shall, then, the little time we have be slept away? Shall it be wasted in idle wishes, in fruitless plans, and abortive pursuits? Rather let us consider its swiftness—its shortness—its end—its uncertainty—its irrecoverability. Let us estimate it as a very important part of our property, and guard against every intruder who would rob us of it. It is too valuable to be given away—it is too precious to be destroyed. The past is not to be recalled; the future, as yet, is uncertain to us. Between these two great gulfs of time subsist the present, as an isthmus or bridge, along which we are all going; let us not pass it with inconsiderate, hasty steps, but remember well how much depends upon our holding a steady and properly conducted course.—*Gems of Thought*.

[16418] There is no house on the shores of time which the waves will not wash away. There is no path here which the foot of disappointment will not tread. There is no sanctuary here which sorrow will not invade. There is a home provided for the soul, but you can reach it only by living for God : to none others than those who thus live will its doors be opened.—*Ibid.*

[16419] The readiness for death is that of character, not of occupation ; and God does not wish me to be always thinking about dying. He wants me to live. He wants me to walk with Himself while I live, and if I do that, I may leave the dying to take care of itself, or rather He will take care of the dying.—*Rev. W. Taylor, D.D.*

[16420] It is appointed unto men once to die ; but it is at the same time a substantial comfort to know that it is only appointed unto all men to die once ; and he who dies twice has to thank his own carelessness, his own unbelief, his own indifference, and his own folly, for the second death.—*Dulce Domum.*

[16421] If life has not made you by God's grace, through faith, holy—think you, will death without faith do it? The cold waters of that narrow stream are no purifying bath in which you may wash and be clean. No ! no ! as you go down into them, you will come up from them.—*Rev. A. Maclaren, D.D.*

[16422] Will death occasion a suspension or abolition of the system of ethical rule so plainly discernible in the present existence?—a query to which another, linked with considerations more or less easy of solution, may be not unfitly annexed : Is death a change which, obliterating the traces of evil from the soul, is accompanied by a *παλιγγενεσία* into a pure and Divine condition of consciousness and thought. All deductions from the mode of human development, and from general analogy, would conspire to support the belief that man carries with him into the unseen world the same mingled qualities of good and evil that form the staple of his inner being on earth ; the notion of any abrupt or essential alteration of nature at death being repugnant alike to philosophy and religion. Character is not transformed in a moment, whether for the better, or for the worse.—*W. B. Chulov.*

[16423] At what employment would you have death find you? For my part, I would have it in some humane, beneficent, public-spirited, noble action. But if I cannot be found doing any such great things, yet at least I would be doing what I cannot be restrained from, what is given me to do—correcting myself, improving that faculty which makes use of the phenomena of existence to produce tranquillity, and render to the several relations of life their due ; and if I am so fortunate, advancing still further in the security of judging right. If death overtakes me in such a situation, it is enough for me if I

can stretch out my hands to God and say, "The opportunities I have received from Thee of comprehending and obeying Thy administration I have not neglected. As far as in me lay, I have not dishonoured Thee. See how I have used my perceptions ; how my convictions. Have I at any time found fault with Thee? Have I been discontented with Thy dispensations, or wished them otherwise? Have I transgressed the relations of life? I thank Thee that Thou hast brought me into being. I am satisfied with the time I have enjoyed the things Thou hast given me. Receive them back again, and distribute them as Thou wilt. For they were all Thine and Thou gavest them me."—*Epictetus.*

[16424] He that dies in an earnest pursuit is like one that is wounded in hot blood ; who, for the time, scarce feels the hurt ; and therefore a mind fixed and bent upon somewhat that is good doth avert the dolors of death : but above all, believe it, the sweetest canticle is, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace."—*Sir F. Bacon.*

[16425] However dreary we may have felt life to be here, yet when that hour comes—the winding up of all things, the last grand rush of darkness on our spirits, the hour of that awful sudden wrench from all we have ever known or loved, the long farewell to sun, moon, stars, and light—brother man, I ask you this day, and I ask myself humbly and fearfully, "What will then be finished? When it is finished, what will it be? Will it be the butterfly existence of pleasure, the mere life of science, a life of uninterrupted sin and self-gratification, or will it be, 'Father, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do'?"—*Rev. F. Robertson.*

[16426] Life for every Christian man must be lonely. After all communion we dwell as upon islands, dotted over a great archipelago, each upon his little rock with the sea dashing between us, but the time comes when, if our hearts are set upon that great Lord, whose presence makes us one, there shall be no more sea, and all the isolated rocks shall be parts of a great continent. Death sets the solitary in families. We are here like travellers plodding lonely through the night and the storm, and then crossing the threshold into the great hall full of friends.—*A. Maclaren, D.D.*

[16427] What becomes of the soul, if made the slave of the body, when the body, its master and idol, has been converted into dust? What becomes in death of the accomplishments of the body, the artistic language of gesture, the sportive wit of the moment, the capacity for over-reaching and seducing others, the power of flattery, the thousand little arts of vanity and conceit? They perish with the flesh. But the poor neglected spirit, and the forgotten eternity—they endure ! Fearful as it may be, they endure ; and the consequences of sin, and the account to be rendered, and the judgment, and

the righteous before God—they endure.—*Zschokke.*

[16428] He who cannot think cheerfully of death has probably never thought cheerfully and rationally of life. To those to whom death is a mysterious, and therefore repugnant image, life itself can be little more than a confused riddle; for they cannot, as yet, have any clear conception of the purpose of their existence.—*Ibid.*

[16429] This preparation ought not to be deferred, for although sudden death is not general, yet, as it happens to some, we can never be sure but it will happen to us. It is a shocking thing to have to dig a well at the last moment, just when you are dying of thirst.—*Dulce Domum.*

[16430] If death were to be the dissolution of the whole, it would be good news to bad men when they die to have an end put to this body and to their depravity, and also to their souls; but since the soul appears to be immortal, there is no other way of escaping evil, no other safety, but to become as good and as wise as they can.—*Plato.*

[16431] The water-spider provides for its respiration and life beneath the surface of the water by spinning around itself an envelope large enough to contain the air it needs. So we have need, while walking through the thick and often polluted moral atmosphere of this lower world, where seeming life is too frequently inward death, to maintain around ourselves the purer atmosphere of a higher faith in things invisible, without which we should morally droop and die.—*Prof. Morris.*

[16432] The great end of life is to make us like Christ, and pleasing Christ. If life has done that for us we have got the best out of it, and our life is completed, whatever may be the number of days. Quality, not quantity, is the thing that determines the perfectness of a life. And like as in northern lands, where there is only a week or two from the melting of the snow to the cutting of the hay, the whole harvest of life may be gathered in a very little space, and all be done which is needed to make life complete. Has your life this completeness? Can you be "satisfied" with it because the river of the flowing hours bore down some grain of gold amidst the mass of mud, and, notwithstanding many sins and failures, you have thus fulfilled the end of your being, that you are in some measure trusting and serving the Lord Jesus Christ?—*Rev. A. Maclaren, D.D.*

[16433] Death will some day be a sentence against which no appeal can be heard. It may seem hard to part with so many friends, so many interests, so much worth, so many hopes, so many enthusiasms; but there is no help for it, and it is better for our own sakes, and still more for the honour of our God, that we should bow

to the inevitable instead of imitating on our deathbeds those unhappy criminals who are said from time to time to engage in a struggle with the stern ministers of the law upon the steps of the scaffold. The great laws by which God governs His universe will not, we may take it for granted, be repealed in our interest; we have but to acknowledge and to submit to them, or rather to submit to Him who works in and through them. For after all we are not in the hands of some unfeeling, some relentless force; but rather of a most tender Father, whom we well may trust. And we prepare for this final act of trust, expressing itself in self-resignation to Him, by many previous acts of resignation; by readily, joyfully yielding up our wills when we have to suffer what we do not like; by treating each personal annoyance, each failure, each illness, each loss of friends or of means, as a step in that blessed training which is wholesome for men who have to die, who have one day to say for the last time, "Not my will, but Thine be done." By sacrifice man does not merely learn to await death, he goes out to meet, to welcome it; he learns how to transfigure a stern necessity into the sublimest of virtues. His life is not simply to be taken from him; he will have the privilege of offering it to God, for each true act of sacrifice, each surrender, whether in will or in act of self, carries with it the implied power of controlling the whole being, not simply on ordinary occasions, but at the crisis, at the trial time of destiny. Those small and secret self-conquests which make up the daily life of a serious Christian, which seem to achieve so little, are yet of an incalculable value, for each is a step in the line of all the discipline which prepares for death.—*Canon Liddon.*

[16434] As our Saviour from His earliest years looked on to that entire offering of His human will which was perfected when He died upon the cross, so the Christian must, by making a free surrender of that which he desires, or of that which he loves, prepare himself for the last great act which awaits him, when, anticipating, controlling—we may dare to say controlling—the final struggle, the last agony, the wrench, the pang of separation between his body and his soul, he will exclaim with the Redeemer, "Into Thy hands, O Father, I commend my spirit!" But he will add, because he is a sinner, a redeemed sinner, "For Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, Thou God of truth!"—*Ibid.*

#### XIV. THE WORKS THAT FOLLOW DEATH (REV. XIV. 13).

[16435] Three friends has man in this world; how do they bear themselves in the hour of death, when God calls him to judgment? Gold, which the multitude account the best of friends, is the first to leave him, and stands him in no stead at that hour of need. Kinsmen and friends attend him to the gates of the grave, and then



return to their homes. The third, which many deem most valueless of all, the works of faith and love accompany him to the throne of the Judge. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying, . . . Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, . . . for their works do follow them."—*Herder (adapted)*.

#### XV. DEATH AS THE GATE OF HEAVEN.

"To him that overcometh" (Rev. iii. 21).

[16436] Death may take away a few worldly comforts, but it gives that which is better; it takes away a flower, and gives a jewel; it takes away a short lease and gives land of inheritance. If the saints possess a kingdom when they die they have no cause to fear death. A prince would not be afraid to cross the sea, though tempestuous, if he were sure to be crowned as soon as he came at shore.—*J. Watson*.

[16437] To the Christian death is not

"So much even as the lifting of a latch;  
Only a step into the open air,  
Out of a tent, already luminous  
With light, that shines through its transparent walls."—*Anon*.

[16438] Death is the justification of all the ways of the Christian, the last end of all his sacrifices, that touch of the Great Master which completes the picture.—*Madame Swetchine*.

[16439] But the grave is not deep, it is the gleaming footmark of an angel who seeks us. When the unknown hand sends the last arrow at the head of man he bends, and the arrow merely takes off the crown of thorns from his wounds. (An allusion, perhaps, to the legend, so lovely to the fancy, that a crucifix in Naples, when Alphonso was besieged there in 1439, bowed its head before a cannon-ball, which consequently took off only the crown of thorns.)—*Richter*.

[16440] What is't to die?

To leave all disappointment, cares, and sorrow,  
To leave all falsehood, treachery, and unkindness,  
All ignominy, suffering, and despair,  
And be at rest for ever! Oh, dull heart,  
Be of good cheer! When thou shalt cease to beat,  
Then shalt thou cease to suffer and complain.  
—*Longfellow*.

[16441] The atheist dares not die, for fear, *non esse*, that he shall not be at all; the profane dares not die for fear, *male esse*, to be damned; the doubtful conscience dares not die because he knows not whether he shall be or be not damned, or not be at all. Only the resolved Christian dares die, because he is assured of his election; he knows he shall be happy, and so lifts up pleasant eyes to heaven, the infallible place of his eternal rest. He dares encounter with this last enemy, trample on him with the

foot of disdain, and triumphantly sing over him (1 Cor. xv. 55). He conquers in being conquered; and all because God has said to his soul, "I am thy salvation."—*T. Adams*.

[16442] The empire of death, which it has required so many ages to overthrow, which has seemed to recover from its defeats, will at last sink by one powerful stroke, never to rise again. It will not require more than a moment of time to raise all the dead, to lay open every sepulchre, to restore every particle of dust, that is fit to be restored, to its proper body, and for all the bodies of the saints to be prepared for the mansion of eternal glory. How insipid and tame are the histories of all other conquests, of the rise and fall of all these kingdoms and empires, when compared with the grand and wonderful achievements of the King Immortal, and the fall of death beneath His power, and the giving up of all His prey! Death shall be known and feared no more. Millions of millions shall join in everlasting praise to Him whom all the redeemed will acknowledge as their great Deliverer.—*R. Hall*.

[16443] In this world, he that is to-day conqueror may to-morrow himself be defeated. Pompey is eclipsed by Cæsar, and then falls by the hands of conspirators; Napoleon conquered nearly all Europe, and was then himself conquered. But the Christian's conquest of death is absolute. The result is final. He has vanquished the last enemy, and has no more battles to fight.—*Foster*.

[16444] Death to a good man is but passing through a dark entry, out of one little dusky room of His Father's house into another that is fair and large, lightsome and glorious, and divinely entertaining.—*A. Clarke*.

[16445] You have felt the exhilarating change from a convalescent chamber to a bright spring day, with its balmy air, its flowers and fragrance and songs. How fresh the burst of devout feeling in a pious mind amid such a scene! What, then, must be the transition from the gloom of a sick-chamber, and the last of life's long struggles, into the tranquillity and joy of the presence of the Lord?—*J. Graham*.

[16446] To-day, to-morrow, every day, to thousands, the end of the world is close at hand. And why should we fear it? We walk here as it were in the crypts of life; at times, from the great cathedral above us we can hear the organ and the chanting of the choir; we see the light stream through the open door, when some friend goes up before us, and shall we fear to mount the narrow staircase of the grave, that leads us out of this uncertain twilight into the serene mansions of life eternal?—*Longfellow*.

[16447] In a Christian, if the fact of death remains, the sting, the humiliation, the terror is gone; death has been transfigured for us on Calvary; it has lost its penal character; it is no

longer the entrance to the gloomy vaults of some sunless underworld, it is the gate of life. "To me," said St. Paul, "to me to die is gain." "The death of the believing," exclaims St. Chrysostom, "retains nothing but the name of death; nay, the very name of death is gone for faith, it is only sleep."—*Canon Liddon*.

[16448] If a man has a statue decayed by rust and age, and mutilated in many of its parts, he breaks it up and casts it into a furnace, and after the melting he receives it again in more beautiful form. As thus the dissolving in the furnace was not a destruction, but a renewing of the statue, so the death of our bodies is not a destruction, but a renovation. When, therefore, you see as in a furnace our flesh flowing away to corruption, dwell not on that sight, but wait for the recasting. And advance in your thoughts to a still higher point, for the statuary casting into the furnace a brazen image but makes a brazen one again. God does not thus; but casting in a mortal body formed of clay, He returns you an immortal statue of gold.—*Chrysostom*.

[16449] At death the saints depart (1) From defiling corruptions into (1) Perfect purity; (2) From heart-sinking sorrows into (2) Fulness of joy; (3) From entangling temptations into (3) Everlasting freedom; (4) From distressing persecutions into (4) Full rest; (5) From pinching wants into (5) Universal supplies; (6) From distracting fears into (6) Highest security; (7) From deluding shadows into (7) Substantial good.—*Flavel*.

[16450] We look not always for triumph and rapture in the deathbed of the righteous; but, if there be not ecstasy, there is often that composedness in departing believers which shows that the "everlasting arms" are under them and around them. It is a beautiful thing to see a Christian die—the confession, while there is strength to articulate, that God is faithful to His promises, the faint pressure of his hand, giving the same testimony, when the tongue can no longer do its office; the motion of the lips, inducing you to bend down, so that you catch broken syllables of expressions such as this: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;"—these make the chamber in which the righteous die one of the most privileged scenes upon earth; and he who can be present, and gather no assurance that death is fettered and manacled, even while grasping the believer, must be either inaccessible to moral evidence, or insensitive to the most heart-touching appeal.—*Rev. H. Melville, B.D.*

[16451] Death is a midnight that breaks into another morning. It is a discord that will resolve itself into a richer concord: a shadow dissolving that the real person may appear. There is music in the heart of our last trouble. We must celebrate it with "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory."—*J. Pulsford*.

[16452] Life completes itself through death. By death only the two bands whom death had severed become one. And this is the Christian victory over death. The terror compelled to become the minister; the demon transformed into the angel; the great destroyer changed into the great reconciler, and constrained to complete with eternal perfectness that unity which, but for Christ, he had for ever destroyed.—*B. Browne*.

[16453] Oh, harmless Death! whom still the valiant brave,

The wise expect, the sorrowful invite,  
And all the good embrace who know the grave  
A short dark passage to eternal light!

—*Sir W. Davenant*.

#### XVI. DEATH AS THE KING OF TERRORS.

To the fearful and unbelieving and such as are out of the way.

[16454] How shocking must thy summons be,  
O Death!

To him that is at ease in his possessions;  
Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,  
Is quite unfurnished for that world to come!  
In that dread moment, how the frantic soul  
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,  
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,  
But shrieks in vain! How wistfully she looks  
On all she's leaving, now no longer hers!  
A little longer, yet a little longer,  
Oh, might she stay, to wash away her stains,  
And fit her for her passage! Mournful sight!  
Her very eyes weep blood; and every groan  
She heaves is big with horror; but the foe,  
Like a staunch murderer, steady to his purpose  
Pursues her close through every lane of life,  
Nor misses once the track, but presses on;  
Till forced at last to the tremendous verge,  
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin.—*Blair*.

#### XVII. DYING WORDS OF EMINENT PERSONAGES.

[16455] Washington: "It is well."

Webster: "I still live."

Goethe: "Let the light enter."

Adams: "Independence for ever."

Tasso: "Into Thy hands, O Lord."

Grotius: "Be serious."

Byron: "I must sleep now."

Napoleon: "Head of the army."

Queen Elizabeth: "All my possessions for a moment of time."

Madame de Staël: "I have God, my father, and liberty."

Cardinal Beaufort: "What! is there no bribing death?"

Sir Walter Raleigh: "It matters little how the head lies."

Franklin: "A dying man can do nothing easy."

John Locke: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the goodness and knowledge of God!"

The noble Wesley simply exclaimed, in calmness of spirit, "The best of all is, God is with us."

Scott said, even when death was creeping very near, "I feel as if I were to be myself again."

Hobbes, the deistic philosopher, said, before he gasped his last breath: "I am taking a fearful leap in the dark."

Dr. Johnson, passing away calmly after a tumult of uneasiness and fear, said to one who stood close beside his bed, "God bless you, my dear!"—*Anon.*

### XVIII. SYMBOLS, METAPHORS, AND SIMILES OF DEATH.

[16456] In the wealth of imaginative creations by which pre-Christian art essayed to idealize death, one of the happiest is the representation of a youthful winged genius, standing with clouded brow and pensive eye in rapt survey of a lifeless body stretched stiff and prostrate at his feet. In the foreground is seen a torch, on which his head and right hand lean, while from his left hand droops a funeral garland surmounted by a fluttering butterfly. The torch itself is extinguished, and its inverted end rests heavily on the corpse's breast. In this figure, with its pathetic garnishings, those wings counterparts of the black pinions on which Horace depicts death hovering about men, noiseless in flight, unerring in descent; the chaplet in use to crown the tombs of the honoured departed; the down-turned flambeau telling of the life quenched; and the quaint form of the insect which, in the strange evolutions of its being, seemed the natural emblem of the disembodied soul—we witness perhaps the most charming invention devised by heathen culture for veiling the dread, inexplicable mien of the spectre feared by man.—*Prof. Salmond.*

[16457] The attention of men of letters has been arrested by the general avoidance of the imagery of the skeleton, and other harsh funeral emblems in the classical delineations of death. The craving for euphemistic expressions in application to the grave and futurity, may well be understood to have been characteristic of ancient rather than modern times. To it are due some of the oldest analogies with which literature has been enriched. The grateful simile comparing death to sleep, which, since its baptism into new virtues of peace through its use on Christ's lips, has entered into the world-wide currency of Christian language, is among the most venerable as well as most catholic coins of thought. Virgil's familiar rendering of Death and Sleep as blood-brothers carries us back to the theology of the poet of *Ascræ*, with whom they are twin-children, the one black and the other white, laid in the lap of their mother, Night. While giving prominence to the most sombre impressions of man's end, Homer can also sing softly at times of these as Divine brothers, twin-born, Jove's faithful mes-

sengers, charged by the Archer-god to bear Sarpedon's corpse on "swift air-cleaving wings" to his home in Lycia.—*Ibid.*

[16458] Unblessed with the power, which is Revelation's gift, of bringing within its horizon the radiant form of that mystic future which cast back upon it the haunting shadows of a world of enigmatical issues behind the sepulchre, heathen thought made it its fond ambition, by the gracious conjurings of poetry, painting, and sculpture, to bid away the dreary bodings excited by a painful and perplexing present, and to throw the flush of a deceptive brightness over hard actualities and harrowing possibilities, when chief or serf, bard or hero, was carried to that "bourne from which no traveller returns." But the disposition to strike out pleasingly idealistic expressions for death, in which, especially in their monumental devices, heathen artists have remarkably surpassed their Christian successors, is itself one of the most unmistakable evidences of the power with which the grave problems of futurity brooded, like a presence refusing to be waived, over the minds of men even in what we are accustomed to consider the immature youth of human wisdom. *Ibid.*

[16459] As a sleep, death is the cessation of all labour and toil. The labourer retires from the vineyard. The racer has ended his course, and reached the goal. The soldier has fought his last battle, and won the victory. The pilgrim has reached the end of his journey, and gained the threshold of his Father's house. All labour and toil have ended. As a sleep, death brings sweet repose. The cares and distractions of business are buried in oblivion. So the revolutions of time, the angry conflict of the raging elements, the noise and tumult of the busy world, disturb not the Christian's calm and tranquil repose. Sleep brings with it mysterious renovation. Ah, what a process takes place here! We see him lying down weary—the grasshopper has become a burden, the eye dim, the strong arm powerless, the once vigorous frame divested of its beauty and wasted by disease. Ah! but on the resurrection morning he rises from his death pillow with a noble frame, endowed with immortal youth, and clothed with imperishable beauty. Sleep is the preparation for further activity. We retire to our final rest in full anticipation of another day, whose dawn will call us forth to scenes of glory and to a life of ceaseless activity.—*I. Hughes.*

[16460] "God giveth His beloved sleep;" and in that peaceful sleep, realities, not dreams, come round their quiet rest, and fill their consciousness and fellowship. In His own time He will make the eternal morning dawn, and the hand that kept them in their slumbers shall touch them into waking, and shall clothe them when they arise according to the body of His



own glory ; and they, looking into His face, and flashing back its love, its light, its beauty, shall each break forth into singing as the rising light of that unsetting day touches their transfigured and immortal heads, in the triumphant thanksgiving, "I am satisfied, for I awake in Thy likeness."—*Rev. A. MacLaren, D.D.*

[16461] You cannot find in the New Testament any of those hateful representations of dying which men have invented, by which death is portrayed as a ghastly skeleton with a scythe, or something equally revolting. The figures by which death is represented in the New Testament are very different. There are two of them which I think to be exquisitely beautiful. One is that of falling asleep in Jesus. When a little child has played all day long, and become tired out, and the twilight has sent it in weariness to its mother's knee, where it thinks it has come for more excitement, then, almost in the midst of its frolicking, and not knowing what influence is creeping over it, it falls back in the mother's arms, and nestles close to the sweetest and softest couch that ever cheek pressed, and, with lengthening breath, sleeps ; and she smiles and is glad, and sits humming unheard joy over its head. So we fall asleep in Jesus. We have played long enough at the games of life, and at last we feel the approach of death. We are tired out, and we lay our head back on the bosom of Christ and quietly fall asleep.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[16462] The saints who are in life and death united to Christ are spoken of as those who "sleep in Jesus." He is their *κοιμητηριον*, or cemetery, where sleep is life while life is sleep (1 Thess. iv. 14).—*W. Pope, D.D.*

[16463] Death is like the setting sun (Jer. xv. 9). 1. The sun in setting disappears from view. As the great central orb is lost to our part of the world as he sinks beneath the horizon, so man is lost to the view of earth as he descends to the grave. The "places that knew him know him no more." Many of the mighty dead once shone as suns in the firmament of the race, but are now hid for ever from our view. They are in the land of darkness as darkness itself. 2. The sun in setting obeys its law. "The sun knoweth his going down." It leaves our horizon by a Divine ordination. Death is a law of nature. All organized bodies are fated to dissolution. It is as natural for the body to die as for the sun to go down. 3. The sun in setting is often gorgeous. Often have we seen the monarch of the day ride down in a chariot of glittering gold. Many a man has died under a halo of moral splendour. Like Stephen, they have seen the heavens open, and reflected the celestial rays as they came down. 4. The setting sun will rise again. The sun, when he passes from our sight, is not only still in existence, and shines as bright as ever, but in a few hours appears again in our horizon. So with man in death. He does not go out of

existence : he only sinks from view, and sinks to rise again in new splendour. Moses on Nebo went down in deep shadow and profound loneliness. After fifteen centuries he appears on Mount Tabor in moral splendour, in association with Elijah, three apostles, and Christ the Redeemer of man and the glory of all worlds. Conclusion.—Let us fulfil our mission as the sun does his, move in our little circle in harmony with Divine law, enlightening, vivifying, and beautifying all, and then death need have no terror for us. Our path will be as a "shining light, shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day." The good will shine as the sun in the kingdom of heaven for ever.—*D. Thomas, D.D.*

[16464] God's finger touched him, and he slept.—*Lord Tennyson.*

[16465] Death is like thunder in two particulars : we are alarmed at the sound of it ; and it is formidable only from that which preceded it.—*C. Colton.*

[16466] St. Paul speaks of death as a dissolution, when writing about his own death to the Philippians during his first imprisonment, when writing to Timothy about it during his second imprisonment. "I have a desire to be dissolved," he says in the one place ; "the time of my departure"—it should be "of my dissolution"—"is at hand," he says in the other. The idea of death which this expression involves is that of a severance between the physical and the spiritual parts of men's complex being, just as the body itself, when the vital principle has deserted it, is chemically resolved into its constituent elements. When writing to the Corinthians, St. Paul speaks of death as "our earthly house of this tabernacle" being "destroyed," or "dissolved." Here he is plainly thinking of the soul as the personal, the enduring being—as the real man, which is only lodged for a while in the bodily tent or envelope, which passes forth from it at death. St. Peter says of himself, "As long as I am in this tabernacle I think it right to put you in remembrance." Here St. Peter, too, is speaking of his body as a tent in which his soul will dwell for a little longer until at length its curtains will be rent by the martyrdom which awaits him.—*Canon Liddon.*

## XIX. THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

### I. Meaning of the term.

*The condition of the soul after death previous to the resurrection.*

[16467] It is past doubt with me, both by evidence from reason and scripture, that the soul does not sleep away all the time betwixt death and the resurrection, but has the use of its faculties in its separate state, and more free and enlarged too than in this gross terrestrial body, and is either happy or miserable, accord-

ing to its prevailing temper and character at the time of its leaving the body.—*H. Grove.*

[16468] It is not the *σάρξ*, the mass of earthly material, but the *σῶμα*, the organic whole, to which the Scriptures promise a resurrection. The living form which appropriates matter to itself is the true body, and in its glorified state becomes the *σῶμα πνευματικόν*. The Scriptures teach that between death and resurrection the soul is *unclothed*.—*J. Müller.*

[16469] I entirely share the feeling, which is now so commonly avowed, that Protestants have not given that prominence to the doctrine of the intermediate, as distinct from the ultimate, state, which Scripture so clearly asserts, and the assertion of which is quite necessary to exhibit, in full symmetry and significance, the orthodox doctrine of the Last Things.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[16470] The entire, perfect, and unlimited freedom of a disembodied spirit appears to be exquisitely portrayed in the 139th Psalm, where its wanderings and transitions from place to place, and from sphere to sphere, unrestrained by the incumbency of matter, are sublimely described, in its vain attempt to escape from the Divine omniscience—"If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there. If I descend into hell, Thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy Spirit lead me, Thy right hand shall hold me."—*G. Harris.*

[16471] If the state of the dead until the resurrection morning be one of entire unconsciousness, our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus is worse than unmeaning. It is untrue in a sense which we forbear here to characterize. Nor is this the only decisive statement of His. The promise to the dying thief, "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise," would be worse than unmeaning if the dying man were to lapse that instant into unconsciousness, and continue in that state till the moment of the general awakening.—*J. B. Heard.*

[16472] According to the fundamental representations of revelation, the life of man is to be lived in three cosmoical spheres: first, the sphere in which we dwell in the flesh, *ἐν σαρκί*, our present life, whose prevailing bias is sensible and outward—for not only is all spiritual activity conditioned by sense, but the spirit groans under the tyranny of the flesh; next, a sphere in which we live, *ἐν πνεύματι*, wherein spirituality and inwardness is the fundamental feature; and this is the intermediate state; and lastly, a sphere in which we shall again live in the body, but in a glorified body, and in a glorified nature, which is perfection, the renewal and perfecting of this world to its final goal.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[16473] The departed find themselves in a condition of rest, a state of passivity, that they are in "the night wherein no man can work"

(John ix 4). Their kingdom is not one of works and deeds, for they no longer possess the conditions upon which works and deeds are possible. Nevertheless, they live a deep spiritual life; for the kingdom of the dead is a kingdom of subjectivity, a kingdom of calm thought and self-fathoming, a kingdom of *remembrance* in the full sense of the word, in such a sense, I mean, that the soul now enters into its own inmost recesses, resorts to that which is the very foundation of life, the true substratum and source of all existence. So far is the human *ψυχή* in this state from drinking Lethe, that it may evermore be said, "Their works do follow them" (Rev. xiv. 13); those moments of life, which were hurried away and scattered in the stream of time, rise again, collected together and absolutely present to the recollection—a recollection which must be viewed as bearing the same relation to our temporal consciousness as the true visions of poetry bear to the prose of finite life—a vision which must be the source either of joy or of terror, because it presents to view the real and deepest truth of consciousness, which may not only be comforting and bliss-giving, but judging and condemning truth also. As, therefore, their works thus follow departed spirits, they not only live and move in the element of bliss or woe, which they have formed and prepared for themselves in time, but they continue to receive and work out a new state of consciousness; because they continue spiritually to mould and govern themselves in relation to the *new* manifestations of the Divine will now first presented to their view; and in this manner still to develop themselves until the last, the final judgment.—*Ibid.*

[16474] In the period that elapses between death and the resurrection it must be obvious that neither the happiness of the righteous nor the misery of the wicked are complete. The time of separation of soul and body is necessarily a time of anticipation of their ultimate reunion. This anticipation is the object of hope and joy to the one, and of dread and misery to the other. The second coming of Christ to raise the dead and to judge the world will be the consummation of the blessedness of the redeemed, and of the perdition of the lost. It is on this account that in the inspired volume the views and hopes of believers are pointed, not so frequently to the season of death (although then the transition takes place directly to heaven and to hell) as to the season of the resurrection: that being the time of the "consummation of all things," the winding up of the whole scheme of the Divine administration towards the world and towards His Church, the completion of the glory and bliss of the kingdom of Christ, as well as of the overthrow and final doom of the kingdom of Satan.—*Rev. R. Wardlaw, D.D.*

[16475] The intermediate state is the sabbath of man's existence, without which his week-day of life on earth would be miserably incomplete. But the Sabbath being past, the first day of the

week, the Easter Day of a new creation, must begin to dawn. On the Sabbath, the activity of man is turned into a new direction, and the body rests, that the spirit may bestir itself. But the Sabbath is the last day of the old week, not the first day of the new. The resurrection morning will bring in a new order of things. As with Christ the first-fruits, so with us His people. He was put to death in the flesh, and quickened in the spirit, and in that spirit passed into the intermediate state. But to be made like His brethren in all things, He rose again on Easter morning in the completeness of human nature, body, soul, and spirit. He is thus the first-fruits of them that sleep. All His people, without exception, are either one or two removes behind Him in the process by which mortality is swallowed up of life. We who are in the body are two removes behind Him, those in the intermediate state are only one. But none, not even Moses and Elias, have yet put on the resurrection body. They are only conformable to His death, but have not yet attained to the resurrection from the dead.—*J. B. Heard.*

[16476] I protest before God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and all that believe in Him, that I hold of the souls of the departed as much as may be proved by manifest and open Scripture, and think the souls departed in the faith of Christ and love of the law of God, to be in no worse case than the soul of Christ was, from the time He delivered His spirit into the hands of His Father until the resurrection of His body in glory and immortality. Nevertheless, I confess openly that I am not persuaded that they be already in the full glory that Christ is in, or the elect angels of God are in, neither is it any article of my faith; for if it so were, I see not but then the preaching of the resurrection of the flesh were a thing in vain. Notwithstanding, yet I am ready to believe it, if it may be proved with open Scripture.—*Tyndale.*

[16477] Many expressions of Scripture, in the natural and obvious sense, imply that an intermediate and separate state of the soul is actually to succeed death. Such are the words of the Lord to the penitent thief upon the cross, Luke xxiii. 43. Stephen's dying petition, Acts vii. 59. The comparisons which the Apostle Paul makes in different places (2 Cor. v. 6, &c.; Philip. i. 21) between the enjoyment which true Christians can attain by their continuance in this world, and that which they enter on at their departure out of it, and several other passages. Let the words referred to be read by any judicious person, either in the original or in the common translation, which is sufficiently exact for this purpose, and let him, setting aside all theory or system, say, candidly, whether they would not be understood, by the gross of mankind, as presupposing that the soul may and will exist separately from the body, and be susceptible of happiness or misery in that state. If anything could add to the native evidence of the expressions, it would be the

unnatural meanings that are put upon them, in order to disguise that evidence.—*R. Watson.*

## 2 Teaching of the early Church.

[16478] According to the teaching of the early Church the soul after death was consigned to a place of happiness or misery in Hades, and there remained till the day of judgment. St. Justin says, "The souls of the good are consigned to a better place, and those of the evil and unjust to a worse, there to await the day of judgment." Or, according to St. Irenaeus, "souls go to the place appointed for them by God, and there remain till the resurrection, awaiting it." Tertullian alleges the example of the rich man and Lazarus as proving that the soul is now in a state of happiness or misery, awaiting its union with the body, and the final award of judgment. St. Cyprian also says, "The just are called to refreshment (*refrigerium*), and the wicked hurried away to punishment." Novatian speaks of Hades as "the place where the souls of the wicked and the righteous are brought, experiencing a foretaste of future judgment" (*futuri iudicii praejudicia sentientes*). And Lactantius "Let no one think that souls are judged immediately after death, all are detained in one and a common custody until the supreme Judge shall examine their deservings" (*meritorum faciat examen*). An exception was believed to be made in the case of martyrs, who were supposed immediately after death to be admitted to the beatific vision. All others were believed to remain in the intermediate state till the day of judgment.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[16479] The Church has always rejected an opinion, not unknown in an early age, and often maintained in modern times, that the soul after death remains in a state of sleep or unconsciousness till the resurrection; for though the Scripture speaks of the death of the righteous as a falling asleep (John xi. 11; Acts vii. 60; 1 Thess. iv. 13), the metaphor is not intended to intimate that the righteous are in a state of unconsciousness, but of refreshment or repose from the trials and sorrows of life; and it especially implies their assured hope of a re-awakening—a resurrection to eternal life.—*Ibid.*

## 3 Question raised: Is it a probationary or disciplinary state?

[16480] It is reasonable to suppose that those who have never in this world heard the name of Christ should hear it in the world to come. It is reasonable to suppose that those who have been born and educated in a state of life fatally corrupt, and who have not been aware of its corruption, should have their eyes opened to that corruption. Nay, we think it is even reasonable that those who, living in a high state of civilization have been misled by false reasoning into doubt or atheism, should have their eyes opened to the truth. And admitting all this, we must necessarily admit its reasonable conse-



quence, viz., that many souls who have hitherto groped in darkness, not knowing it to be darkness, nor knowing its contrary the light, will be irresistibly drawn to the light when it is made known to them.—*Church Quarterly Review*.

[16481] If in the world of the dead there is an opportunity of finding Christ, we can understand St. Paul's consolation in the thought that all Israel would be saved. His sympathies were drawn out not for some future generations of Israel, belonging to a remote posterity who would become believers in Jesus, but for the Israel which he knew, his kinsmen and brethren according to the flesh. How, as touching the election, were they beloved for the fathers' sakes, unless the gifts and calling of God were without repentance in reference to them as well as in reference to any other future representatives of the stock of Israel? If all the race of the Jews, from St. Paul's time to our own, who have not received Jesus as their Messiah, have rejected Him for ever, it is impossible to put any tolerable meaning on the eleventh chapter of Romans.—*Shalders*.

[16482] As to those who enter the other world alienated from God and goodness, whatever clear intimations the Bible affords us respecting them are uncheered by any ray of hope. They go to their own place; they are in custody (*ἐν φυλακῇ*), reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished; between them and the righteous a great gulf is fixed, which is impassable. Now this absence of activity and moral change, investing the separate state with a kind of blank uniformity—though as bright on the one side as it is dark on the other—fully accounts for the manner in which the New Testament writers treat it, which otherwise would be inexplicable. They do not seem to dwell upon it at all; they recognize its existence, and the general features mentioned, but nothing more; their minds constantly spring forward, often without any hint of an intervening period, to the great day of their Lord's appearing, with its eternal glory and joy, because the grand event of Christ's second coming, conjoined with the resurrection, is the one clear fact in the future which had a personal interest for them: in that they saw the consummation of their hopes and the crown of their triumph. But the interval between death and the resurrection was evidently, in their view, of no practical account; it would in no way affect the final determination of any man's state, and therefore they barely touch upon it. Now, how would this have been possible if they had had grounds for believing that, during that interval, the ministry of converting grace would still be carried on in Hades? What a vast influence that would have on the development of Christ's kingdom, and the manifestation of His saving power! They could not have avoided frequent, clear, and joyous references to it, if the view we are now controverting had been true; but instead of that, they have left not a

single statement that wears a plain, unquestionable aspect in its favour.—*British Quarterly*.

[16483] What fact can be adduced in proof or illustration of the power ascribed to death of changing and purifying the mind? What is death? It is the dissolution of certain limbs and organs by which the soul now acts. But these, however closely connected with the mind, are entirely distinct from its powers, from thought and will, from conscience and affection. Why should the last grow pure from the dissolution of the first? Why shall the mind put on a new character by laying aside the gross instruments through which it now operates? At death, the hands, the feet, the eye, and the ear perish. But they often perish during life; and does character change with them? It is true that our animal appetites are weakened and sometimes destroyed by the decay of the bodily organs on which they depend. But our deeper principles of action, and the moral complexion of the mind, are not therefore reversed. It often happens that the sensualist, broken down by disease which excess has induced, comes to loathe the luxuries to which he was once enslaved; but do his selfishness, his low habits of thought, his insensibility to God, decline and perish with his animal desires? Lop off the criminal's hands; does the disposition to do mischief vanish with them? When the feet mortify, do we see a corresponding mortification of the will to go astray? The loss of sight or hearing is a partial death; but is a single vice plucked from the mind, or one of its strong passions palsied, by this destruction of its chief corporeal instruments?—*W. Channing*.

[16484] The idea that by dying or changing worlds a man may be made better or virtuous, shows an ignorance of the nature of moral goodness or virtue. This belongs to free beings; it supposes moral liberty. A man cannot be made virtuous as an instrument may be put in tune, by a foreign hand, by an outward force. Virtue is that to which the man himself contributes. It is the fruit of exertion. It supposes conquest of temptation. It cannot be given from abroad to one who has wasted life or steeped himself in crime. To suppose moral goodness breathed from abroad into the guilty mind, just as health may be imparted to a sick body, is to overlook the distinction between corporeal and intellectual natures, and to degrade a free being into a machine.—*Ibid.*

[16485] To suppose no connection to exist between the present and the future character, is to take away the use of the present state. Why are we placed in a state of discipline, exposed to temptation, encompassed with suffering, if, without discipline and by a sovereign act of omnipotence, we are all of us, be our present characters what they may, soon and suddenly to be made perfect in virtue and perfect in happiness?—*Ibid.*

[16486] With sin on the one hand, deepening, accumulating, intensifying, ever tending more and more into complete sinfulness, ever drawing us by slow and silent action into that increasing aversion to what is holy and good, which has always been regarded by all deep thinkers as the dread harbinger of final impotence,—with such tendencies on the one hand, and on the other, with a fast diminishing attraction toward the great centre of life, who shall dare to trust that a future day shall find him in a sphere where reconciliation and restoration may still be possible and realizable?—*Bp. Ellicott.*

[16487] If sinners may be converted in the intermediate state, we must give up that important gospel truth, that every one will be judged according to the deeds done in the body. For if sinners may, and some actually do, repent and obtain forgiveness betwixt death and judgment, they cannot be condemned and doomed to suffer the second death for the sins of this life.—*D. Isaac.*

[16488] If half, or much less than half, that Mr. Cox and Canon Farrar have fancifully sketched were true, as to the future discipline and remedial treatment of men who have died in unbelief, then we should meet with allusions to this ministry beyond the grave—disclosures of this marvellous development of redeeming grace—on every other page of the New Testament: it would form the great burden of the songs of the ransomed, for in fact the triumphs of the gospel in Hades would far eclipse its success on the earth. It would not be hidden away in the obscure corner of a passage, the meaning of which is confessedly open to dispute; it would not hang on doubtful renderings of words that must be put through a process of manipulation before they will yield a sense even seemingly in its favour. It would have shone forth, beyond denial, with the clearness of the light of day in all descriptions of the results of Christ's victory, to animate us in our conflicts with His adversaries, as well as to relieve our fears and to calm our griefs respecting many of the departed. It would not have been, as one of its advocates terms it, an "embedded truth," requiring to be dug up from its concealment: it would have sparkled in the forefront of the gospel. But whether the notion be true or false, the very reverse is the case. A solemn reticence marks all the allusions of the inspired writers to the period intervening between death and the resurrection: they say exceedingly little about it. They tell us nothing more than this, that for believers "to be absent from the flesh is to be present with the Lord," they shall "live together with Him;" while the unbelieving and disobedient go to their own place; they are "in prison," or in *custody*, reserved unto judgment. Surely this silence of the apostles ought to teach a lesson to the rash speculators of our day, who forget the rebuke that should deter us from "in-

truding into those things which we have not seen."—*A. Thompson, D.D.*

[16489] We are bound to point out that nowhere in the sacred writings is hell referred to as exerting a remedial influence on the criminal; if it does exert such an influence, it was an inexcusable oversight not to dwell upon the fact specifically. On the other hand, it is distinctly taught by Jesus Christ, that if men will not avail themselves of such moral advantages as are at their disposal, they would not be persuaded *though one rose from the dead.*—*J. Parker, D.D.*

[16490] Proclaim from the housetops, if you will, that *if* this life has not been to any man a fair probation, God must give him another, or provide some means that he shall be done no wrong; but hesitate before you decide that *if*, and remember you have no right to tell any man that a second probation will be his or his neighbour's. Yea, remember further that the message of reconciliation is also a message of warning: God "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 30, 31).—*J. Gregory.*

#### 4 The doctrine as it affects intercession for the dead.

[16491] The abuses which are connected in the Romish Church with the doctrine of the intermediate state between death and the day of judgment caused in the Lutheran Church the whole doctrine of the intermediate state to be thrust back and placed in the shade, and therewith also intercession for the dead, which certainly in the Romish soul-masses comes into the foreground in so unevangelical a way. If with the moment of death the fate of the soul in the future life is irrevocably decided, no doubt it is not only useless but unbecoming to pray in regard to that in which no change is possible. In the Protestant theology of the present time the doctrine of the intermediate state has again asserted itself, although it must be allowed that a universal agreement by no means prevails regarding it.—*Bp. Martensen.*

### XX. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

#### 1 The Church's voice on the subject of cremation.

[16492] We bow in humility under God's order, but have a sacred dread to enter upon voluntary experiments which should invade that law of dissolution that is confirmed by the Divine word, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," whereby certainly not a process of burning is indicated, but dissolution in the bosom of the earth. And on the grave we plant the cross, which reminds us of sin, and death as the wages of sin, but likewise of this, that the crucified Christ has taken its sting from death, and by His resurrection has changed death into an en-

trance into the heavenly kingdom. When in our days voices are heard urging that burial be exchanged for cremation, we can only recognize in them utterances of a modern heathenism. For visibly the spokesmen of this agitation lack all religious presuppositions, regarding death as a mere process of nature, and relying exclusively upon "sanitary" grounds, about which there may be infinite disputations *pro* and *contra*.—*Ibid.*

[16493] That the Christian Church—even granting that unchristianized states should accept the proposed procedure—will never engage in it, may be predicted with confidence. The Church cannot burn her dead, and let this custom take the place of the previous mode of burial; cannot break with her old venerable tradition, without likewise committing to the same fire also her figurative speech founded on the Scripture, which throughout speaks of death and resurrection, under presupposition of the burial of the dead. She would then have to acquire a new figurative language, and, for instance, appropriate the bird Phoenix from the heathen myth, which indeed for a time wandered into the Christian Church, an idea of the human spirit, how it raises itself from the ashes, and by its own power conquers death. That the Church shall sacrifice her old mode of speech, derived from the Lord Himself and His apostles, in which she expresses her ground-thoughts of earthly and heavenly things, and—a thing quite impossible—shall frame to herself a new view and language, is indeed to make a witless and absurd requirement of her.—*Ibid.*

## 2 Views of ancient classics.

[16494] Permit then that the dead Be in the earth entomb'd. Each various part, That constitutes the frame of man, returns Whence it was taken; to th' ethereal sky The soul, the body to its earth: of all, Nought, save this breathing space of life, our own:  
The earth then, which sustain'd it when alive, Ought to receive it dead.—*Euripides*.

## XXI. HOMILETICAL HINTS.

1 The thought of death should endue us with a sense of our eternal dependence upon God, and fill our minds with holy fear.

[16495] The whole earth is one vast repository of the wrecks of humanity. We tread upon the ashes of our ancestors in our way to the temple of religion, to the exchange of merchandise, to the house of feasting. This is a thought which is seldom entertained by us when pursuing our common avocations. Our very habitations are built over dust that once lived, and that shall live again. It does not occur to the sons of riot when they waste the night in revelry, and when the morning sun blushes at their prolonged dissipation, that the theatre of their licentious debauchery is elevated upon the chambers of

death, and shall hereafter become a stage on which the mighty power of God shall be displayed, when their ancestors shall stand to be judged on the very spot which their sons have polluted by their vices. It does not occur to those who occupy places in the house of God that those who have deserted them shall one day start up to resume their vacant places, and that the house of prayer shall furnish one little scene in the great and general judgment. The superstitious and the weak are afraid of passing through a churchyard in the hours of darkness and of solitude, and avoid it as though death held his court there alone. Alas! they forget that in the highway, or the field, or the garden, they are treading upon kindred dust; and that the living dwell in "the congregation of the dead." And this gives us a just idea of the grave. It is not the gulf of oblivion with God, whatever it may be with man. The memorials which we elevate over our friends perish; and, mouldering away, mingle with the earth they once covered. But the memory of the man and his character live before God. Every atom of his dust shall be refunded. The dishonoured form shall be restored "a glorious body." The ashes scattered by the four winds, or swallowed by the sea, or buried in the earth, shall be reclaimed; and death and the grave must give a strict account of the dead committed to their charge. Here we find *hope* springing up in the midst of mortality: and *faith*, rising from the sepulchre, shaking the dust of death from her azure pinions, and soaring, like the eagle, to meet the sun of a resurrection morning!—*Anon.*

[16496] Life, with a swift though insensible course, glides away, and, like a river which undermines its banks, gradually impairs our state. Year after year steals something from us, till the decaying fabric totters of itself, and crumbles at length into dust. So that whether we consider life or death, time or eternity, all things appear to concur in giving to man the admonition of the Psalmist, "Rejoice with trembling."—*Gems of Thought*.

## 2 "As the man lives, so will he die."

[16497] As the soul draws nigh to the gate of death, the solemnities of the eternal future are wont to cast their shadows upon the thought and heart; and whatever is deepest, truest, most assured and precious, thenceforth engrosses every power. At that dread yet blessed hour the soul clings with the most intensity and deliberation to the most certain truths, to the most prized and familiar words. The mental creations of an intellectual over-subtlety, or of a thoughtless enthusiasm, or of an unbridled imagination, or of a hidden perversity of will, or of an unsuspected unreality of character, fade away or are discarded. To gaze upon the naked truth is the one necessity; to plant the feet upon the Rock itself, the supreme desire, in that awful, searching, sifting moment. Often, too, at a man's last hour, will habit strangely



assert its mysterious power of recovering, as if from the grave, thoughts and memories which seemed to have been lost for ever. Truths which have been half forgotten or quite forgotten since childhood, and prayers which were learned at a mother's knee, return upon the soul with resistless persuasiveness and force, while the accumulations of later years disappear and are lost sight of. Depend upon it, the martyrs prayed to Jesus in their agony because they had prayed to Him long before, many of them from infancy; because they knew from experience that such prayers were blessed and answered. They had been taught to pray to Him; they had joined in prayers to Him; they had been taunted and ridiculed for praying to Him; they had persevered in praying to Him; and when at last their hour of trial and of glory came, they had recourse to the prayers which they knew full well to be the secret of their strength, and those prayers carried them on through their agony, to the crown beyond it.—*Canon Liddon.*

[16498] Many might be named who have yielded up the ghost with horrors, cursing with dire imprecation the hour when they abjured Christianity for the blasphemies of infidel philosophy! But who, on a deathbed, was ever heard to curse the day he embraced the Son of God as a Saviour?—*N. Taylor, D.D.*

- 3 The body, if kept in subjection until death, shall be, after the resurrection, no longer a hinderer, but an eternal helpmate to the soul.

[16499] The body which is composed of one of the elements resembles two others of the elements (fire and water) in that it is a good servant but a bad master. Treat it as a servant to the soul now, and hereafter it shall shine with endless glory, and conspire with the soul to serve God eternally; but allow it now to be the master, and hereafter it shall drag the soul down into eternal "blackness of darkness," and shall be the scene and source of the spirit's everlasting torment, as it was on earth of its temptation and its sin.—*M. J.*

## JUDGMENT.

### I. SIGNS PRECEDING THE SECOND ADVENT.

- 1 The age of tribulation.

[16500] In Matt. xxiv. 21, our Lord says, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be"—words which are almost identical with those of the prophet Daniel, "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time (Dan. xii. 1). This age of sorrow and trouble seems as if it would precede the Second Advent by a considerable space of time.

Our Lord calls it "the beginning of sorrows," and says that "the end is not yet" (Matt. xxiv. 8). No doubt it is a mistake to map out with such minuteness the chronology of any prophetic period which is yet future, and all that can be said of this is that the "beginning" and the "end" point to a series of years or generations, during which there will be time for mankind at large to gain some new and terrible experiences. "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars; . . . nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places" (Matt. xxiv. 6, 7). Such typical disturbances of the moral and material world represent the deepest and most widespread intensity of human sufferings; confidence between man and man broken down; the ordinary business of the world interrupted by ambitions and quarrels; mighty physical convulsions shaking the foundations of the earth; life itself made burdensome by hunger, thirst, and disease.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[16501] No rational Christian can venture to say that there is any improbability in the picture which a literal interpretation of our Lord's words in Matt. xxiv. 6-8 portrays. Such things as He predicts are, in their degree, matters of experience, and every now and then we are warned that, in spite of civilization, wars have not ceased, that political economy has not banished famine and drought, and that sanitary science has not abolished disease. The experiences of a scientific age, therefore, are near enough of kin to those of other ages to show that the development of existing tribulation is all that is required for the realization of the horrors predicted as "the great tribulation."—*Ibid.*

### 2 The preparation of the Church.

#### (1) Force of our Lord's prediction.

[16502] It seems to be indicated to us by our Lord that the Second Advent will not occur until the Church has exhausted all her resources in the work of evangelization. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come" (Matt. xxiv. 14). These words refer no doubt, in the first instance, to that apostolic preaching whose sound went forth into all the earth, and its words unto the end of the world" (Rom. x. 18). So, probably, we must interpret some other words of our Lord: "Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over all the cities of Israel until the Son of man be come." In both cases we must remember that (1) all Jews of that generation were to have the witness of the gospel placed before them for acceptance or rejection, before the Son of man came in judgment to their city and nation; (2) and that the witness of the gospel was to be extended to all other nations and generations until the Second Coming of Christ and the end of all things.—*Ibid.*

(2) *The supernatural power requisite for this work.*

[16503] If we look back upon the history of the Church, we shall find that, except in the first age, there is little trace of any such extraordinary spread of the gospel as would seem to satisfy the full force of our Lord's words. In apostolic times the gospel was literally preached to "nations," and whole peoples would be converted at once under the leadership of their rulers, or by the power of a suddenly and mysteriously spread conviction. Since those ages the witness of the gospel has been carried among the heathen without gaining a converting influence over any large numbers at once, and without leading to any strikingly sudden results. . . . The history of past ages and the experience of modern times teaches us that no such proclamation of Christ among the millions of China, India, Japan, and Africa, can ever take place without some renewed and special development of the gifts of the Spirit.—*Ibid.*

[16504] The harvest fields contain hundreds of millions of souls, and the labourers are but a few hundred; the supernatural power of the Evil One is the great support of most of the false religions of the world, and this has to be met at present by only ordinary powers. . . . Those who look closely at the history of Christian missions will soon come to believe that while we are bound to do all the work we can with our present means, it must be by means of a more directly supernatural kind that God will eventually send forth His Church to make a final and universal proclamation of the everlasting gospel.—*Ibid.*

(3) *Connection of the prophet Elijah with the final preparation of the Church.*

[16505] Some look for the supernatural converting of the Church . . . in the fulfilment of a prophecy of Malachi, "I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. iv. 5); to which also they refer the preaching of the two witnesses spoken of in the Book of Revelation. That Elijah is associated in some special manner with the person and work of our Lord is strongly suggested by his presence at the Transfiguration with Moses. The prophecy of Malachi is partly satisfied by the ministry of St. John the Baptist; but "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" may well be supposed to refer to the Second Advent as well as the first. When St. John the Baptist was asked, "Art thou Elias?" he answered, "No." And when the question was asked of our Lord by the disciples, "Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?" it was only after our Lord had spoken of the future, "Elias truly shall first come and restore all things," that He said also of the past, "But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not" (Matt. xvii. 11). Although, therefore, St. John the Baptist did "go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias," ac-

cording to the prophecy of the angel who predicted His birth, there is yet room to believe that the great and dreadful day of the Lord's Second Coming will be preceded by the ministration of Elijah himself, once taken alive into heaven, thence descending, it may be, as one of the two witnesses who shall be slain, and their blood poured forth in the midst of Jerusalem, and who are to prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth, as Elijah prophesied for the time of his former ministration (Rev. xi. 3-12).—*Ibid.*

3 The great apostasy.

(1) *Significance of the name Antichrist.*

[16506] The name Antichrist is plainly a designation formed from the name which indicates the office of our Lord, and by which He was known in prophecy: "The Antichrist" being etymologically related and set opposite to "the Christ." An analogous designation, *'Avriθeoc*, is found in classical writers, and also in St. Chrysostom's commentary on the second chapter of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. The word is undoubtedly intended to signify an opponent of Christ, as St. Augustine says, "Antichristus, id est contrarius Christo," and as is also said by St. Hilary and others; but *avri* in composition bears the sense of usurpation not less than that of opposition, and this seems to have been included, at least, in the original idea of the Antichrist, if it was not the primary sense in which the designation was understood. As the early Church was familiar with the idea of the great enemy of God transforming himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. xi. 14), so was it with the idea of "the Antichrist" being a counterfeit Christ as well as an opponent of Christ.—*Ibid.*

(2) *Various opinions entertained by ancient writers and divines of the early Church concerning the personality and leading characteristics of Antichrist.*

[16507] There was no doubt in the early Church that by the Antichrist referred to in Dan. vii. 8, viii. 8-14, 23; 2 Thess. ii. 3; Rev. xiii. 4, 18, &c., was intended a real person. In more recent times they have been supposed to refer to systems or principles, as the Roman Empire, Infidelity, the Church of Rome, Worldliness. But this mode of interpretation is much less consistent with the language used in both the Old and New Testaments than that which with the ancient Church regards it as setting forth a personal Antichrist. Attributes of personality, life, and individual action are assigned to the Antichrist of Scripture. He is to sit in the temple of God, to exalt himself, to work miracles, to be "that wicked one," to be destroyed, and so forth. . . . More than all, the nature of the opposition which is to be shown by Antichrist towards Christ is manifestly characteristic of a person. Although, therefore, any system which directly opposes itself to Christianity may very naturally be called Antichristianity, yet as the one is the

system of a personal Founder and Centre, so also is the other; as Christianity grows from and converges towards Christ, so Antichristianity grows from and converges towards Antichrist.—*Ibid.*

(3) *Opinions of Protestant writers and reformers, identifying Antichrist with the Church of Rome and its supreme Pontiff.*

[16508] With respect to the commonly received opinion that the Church of Rome is antichrist, Mede and Newton, Daubuz and Clarke, Lowman and Hurd, Jurien, Vitringa, and many other members of the Protestant churches who have written upon the subject, concur in maintaining that the prophecies of Daniel, St. Paul, and St. John point directly to this Church. This was likewise the opinion of the first reformers; and it was the prevalent opinion of Christians in the earliest ages that Antichrist would appear soon after the fall of the Roman Empire. Gregory the Great in the sixth century applied the prophecies concerning the beast in the Revelation, the man of sin, and apostasy from the faith, mentioned by St. Paul, to him who should presume to claim the title of universal priest or universal bishop in the Christian Church; and yet his immediate successor, Boniface III., received from the tyrant Phocas the precise title which Gregory had thus censured. At the Synod of Rheims, held in the tenth century, Arnulphus, Bishop of Orleans, appealed to the whole council whether the Bishop of Rome was not the Antichrist of St. Paul, "sitting in the temple of God," and perfectly corresponding with the description given of him by St. Paul. In the eleventh century all the characters of Antichrist seemed to be so united in the person of Pope Hildebrand, who took the name of Gregory VII., that Johannes Aventinus, a Romish historian, speaks of it as a subject in which the generality of fair, candid, and ingenuous writers agreed that at that time was the reign of Antichrist. And the Albigenses and Waldenses, who may be called the Protestants of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, expressly asserted, in their declarations of faith, that the Church of Rome was the whore of Babylon.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards).*

(4) *The elements of seduction contained in the power of this arch-impator.*

[16509] The opposition of Antichrist to Christ will consist in setting up a person instead of Him as the object of worship, in working miracles such as characterized Christ's First Advent, and in establishing an universal empire in the place of the Church. . . . Men will be attracted to become followers of Antichrist first by his accumulation of universal empire, reverencing in its extremest development (Rev. xiii. 4) that success which is said to be the most successful of all things. They will be attracted also by his supernatural power, the visible exercise of which subdues at once, and the merest shadow of which in the form of "spirit-rapping" has seduced multitudes in the present day in America

and elsewhere. After the chains of such seductions have bound the minds and affections of mankind, they will easily be prevailed upon to take the last step in apostasy: "Fall down and worship me."—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

## II. UNCERTAINTY AS TO THE TIME OF CHRIST'S APPEARING.

1 The perpetual possibility of Christ's Second Advent, and the credibility of prophecy concerning the same notwithstanding its indeterminateness.

[16510] It is a necessary element of the doctrine concerning the Second Coming of Christ, that it should be *possible* at any time, that none should regard it improbable in theirs. The love, the earnest longing of the first Christians, made them to assume that coming to be close at hand. In the strength and joy of this faith they lived and suffered; and when they died, the kingdom was indeed come unto them. The Lord's return is in itself, no doubt, undetermined. Prophecy is no fatalism, and it has been always open to every age by faith and prayer to hasten that coming, so that St. Peter can speak of the faithful not merely as looking for, but also as *hasting*, the coming of the day of God (2 Pet. iii. 12). But while the matter was left by the wisdom of God in this uncertainty, it imported much that after the expectations of the first ages of the Church had failed, those who examined the Scriptures should see plainly there that no pledge had thus been broken, that no prophecy had failed, that what had actually come to pass was contemplated from the first.—*Anon.*

2 The Divine purpose of this uncertainty and the uses to be made of it.

[16511] To penetrate closely into these awful secrets is vain. A sacred obscurity envelops them; the cloud that shrouded the actual presence of God on the mercy-seat shrouds still His expected presence on the throne of judgment. It is a purposed obscurity, a most salutary and useful obscurity, a wise and merciful denial of knowledge. In this matter it is His gracious will to be the perpetual subject of watchfulness, expectation, conjecture, fear, desire—but no more. To cherish anticipation, He has permitted gleams of light to cross the darkness; to baffle presumption, He has made them *only* gleams. He has harmonized, with consummate skill, every part of His revelation to produce this general result—now speaking as if a few seasons more were to herald the new heaven and the new earth, now as if His days were thousands of years; at one moment whispering into the ear of His disciple, at another retreating into the depth of infinite ages. It is His purpose thus to live in our faith and hope, remote yet near, pledged to no moment, possible at any; worshipped not with the consternation of a near, or the indifference of a



distant certainty, but with the anxious vigilance that awaits a contingency ever at hand. This, the deep devotion of watchfulness, humility, and awe, He who knows us best knows to be the fittest posture for our spirits; therefore does He preserve the salutary suspense that ensures it, and therefore will He determine His Advent to no definite day in the calendar of eternity.—*Archer Butler*.

[16512] Shall man alone, whose fate, whose final fate,

Hangs on that hour, exclude it from his thoughts,  
I think of nothing else,—I see! I feel it!  
All nature, like an earthquake, trembling round!  
All deities, like summer swarms, on wings,  
All basking in the full meridian blaze!  
I see the Judge enthroned, the flaming guard!  
The volume open'd—open'd every heart!  
A sunbeam pointing out each secret thought!  
No patron! intercessor none! now past  
The sweet, the clement mediatorial hour!  
For guilt no plea! to pain no pause! no bound!  
Inexorable all! and all extreme!—*Young*.

[16513] Will not the Lord's coming, to most of us, in all probability, be the day of our own death? And would it not be more profitable to be preparing us for that, than to speak to us of an event which may be far distant, and probably will not come on the earth in our time at all? To this question there are two answers—answers which ought to be ever impressed on a Christian's mind. First, the view of things proposed by the inquirer is not that taken in Holy Scripture, which is the rule and pattern of our teaching. There we do not hear anything of preparation for death. I doubt whether one text can be found in which we are exhorted to make such preparation, *as such*. But the constant note, the continually recurring exhortation, is, to be prepared for the Lord's coming. So that if we would teach as God's Word teaches, as our blessed Lord and His apostles taught, we cannot do as the inquirer would have us. Our second answer goes to the reason of the thing, and in fact gives the account and lays open the foundation of the former. He who is prepared for the Lord's coming is necessarily also prepared for his own death. The greater includes the less. He who so lives, so thinks, so speaks, so works, in his daily life, as to be ready for the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, will not be found unready when the summons is heard in a softer tone, and comes with more previous warning. If he can meet the Lord amid the flaming heavens and the gathering dead, he will not be loath to obey his call when its dread reality is tempered with all gentle and kindly alleviation—with the gradual approaches of sickness and infirmity and the tender solaces of loving friends and watchful attendants. But, on the other hand, he who has forgotten his Lord's coming, and has simply been careful about his own dismissal, will ever be too liable in the lesser thing to have neglected

care for the greater; and he will also be well-nigh certain to have lowered his standard of attainment, and narrowed his sympathies unworthily; in taking thought for himself, to have forgotten the great Body of which he is a member; in minding his own safety, to have forgotten the glory of his Lord—nay, his very Lord Himself. For there is nothing that so much takes a man out of himself; nothing that so much raises and widens his thoughts and sympathies; nothing that so much purifies and elevates his hopes, as this preparation for the coming of the Lord.—*Dean Alford*.

### 3 Abuse of this uncertainty.

[16514] The very uncertainty, which was meant as a perpetual stimulant to watchfulness, is abused to security; and exactly as the invisibility of the Creator, which is His perfection, produces the miserable creed of the atheist, the obscurity that veils the hour of judgment, though meant in merciful warning, persuades the ungodly heart that none is ever to arrive.—*Archer Butler*.

### III. MANNER OF CHRIST'S APPEARING.

"With power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 30).

[16515] The globe begins to tremble on its axis; the moon is covered with a bloody veil, the threatening stars hang half detached from the vault of heaven, and the agony of the world commences. Then, all at once, the fatal hour strikes; God suspends the movements of the creation, and the earth has passed away like an exhausted river. Now resounds the trumpet of the angel of judgment; and the cry is heard, "Arise, ye dead!" The sepulchres burst open with a terrific noise, the human race issues all at once from the tomb, and the assembled multitudes fill the valley of Jehoshaphat. Behold, the Son of man appears in the clouds; the powers of hell ascend from the depths of the abyss to witness the last judgment pronounced upon the ages; the goats are separated from the sheep, the wicked are plunged into the gulf, the just ascend triumphantly to heaven, God returns to His repose, and the reign of eternity commences.—*Chateaubriand*.

[16516] That the return of the Lord will not be simply a momentarily becoming visible from heaven, but a return to earth, is, according to the Scriptures, beyond doubt. Those dwellers on the earth who, according to 1 Thess. iv. 17, are caught up to meet Him in the air, must certainly be conceived as thus returning with the heavenly host again to the earth. They form an escort to the King, who personally comes to this part of His royal domain.—*J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*

### IV. THE TWO ADVENTS CONTRASTED.

[16517] Christ came the first time in the guise of humanity; He is to come the second

time in brightness, as a light to the godly, a terror to the wicked. He came the first time in weakness, He is to come the second time in might; the first time in our littleness, the second time in His own majesty; the first time in mercy, the second in judgment; the first time to redeem, the second to recompense, and recompense all the more terribly because of the long-suffering and delay.—*Hildebert.*

[16518] The stable of Bethlehem disappears, and behold the clouds are His chariot. That lonely wanderer amid the hills of Palestine, to whom no man ministered, who was forsaken by all, persecuted by many, is now attended by thousands of angels. The hand which held the reed now sways the sceptre of universal dominion. He has left the cross and ascended the great white throne; and many crowns now sparkle on the head around which thorns were wreathed. He was crucified then amid the execrations of the mob; now He comes amid the hallelujahs of the skies to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.—*Landels.*

[16519] All things, to speak generally, are twofold in our Lord Jesus Christ. His generation is twofold—the one of God, before the worlds; the other of the Virgin, in the end of the world. His descent was twofold—one was in obscurity, like the dew on the fleece; the second is His open coming, which is to be. In His former advent He was wrapped in swaddling clothes in the manger; in His second “He covereth Himself with light as with a garment.” In His first coming He “endured the cross, despising the shame;” in His second He comes attended by the angel-host, receiving glory.—*Cyril of Jerusalem.*

#### V. UNIVERSALITY OF THE RESURRECTION OF MAN CONSEQUENT ON THE SECOND COMING.

[16520] In innumerable myriads from the earth, from the river, and from the rolling waves of the mighty sea, shall they start up at the sounding of that angel trumpet; from peaceful churchyards, from bloody battle-fields, from the catacomb and from the pyramid, from the marble monument and the mountain-cave, great and small, saint and prophet and apostle, and thronging multitudes of unknown martyrs and unrecorded heroes, in every age and every climate, on whose forehead was the Lamb's seal—they shall come forth from the power of death and hell. What a mighty victory! what a giant spoiling! what a trampling of the last enemy beneath the feet! Aye, death smote for ages God's fair creation, he lifted up his hand against the Lord's anointed, he seemed as irresistible as terrible; and yet not kings only and mighty men, but the soul of the meanest beggar that ever died of want in the crowded city street, and the soul of the tenderest newborn infant that passed away like a thin breath of air a

thousand years ago, shall be delivered safe and uninjured, yea, glorified and immortal, out of his armed and icy hand!—*Archdeacon Farrar.*

[16521] At midnight, 'tis presumed this pomp will burst

From tenfold darkness; sudden as the spark  
From smitten steel, from nitrous gran the blaze.  
Man, starting from his couch, shall sleep no more!

The day is broke, which never more shall close!  
Above, around, beneath, amazement all!  
Terror and glory join'd in their extremes!  
Our God in grandeur, and our world on fire,  
All nature struggling in the pangs of death!

—*Young.*

#### VI. ILLUSTRATIVE TYPES AND RESEMBLANCES OF THE RESURRECTION.

[16522] In the insect creation we find a direct and striking example of the resurrection itself. Animals of this class begin their existence in the form of worms. After continuing for some time in the humble state of being to which they are necessarily confined by their structure, they die and are gone. In the moment of death they construct for themselves a species of shell or tomb, in which they may with the strictest propriety be said to be buried. Here they are dissolved into a mass of semi-transparent water, the whole which remains of the previously existing animal exhibiting to the eye no trace of life, and no promise of a future revival. When the term of its burial approaches to a period, the tomb discloses, and a winged animal comes forth, with a nobler form, often exquisitely beautiful, brilliant with the gayest splendour, possessed of new and superior powers, and destined to a more refined and more exalted life. Its food is now the honey of flowers, its field of being the atmosphere. Here it expatiates at large in the delightful exercise of its faculties, and in the high enjoyment of those sunbeams which were the immediate means of its newly acquired existence.—*T. Dwight, D.D.*

[16523] In the case of the seed, or the “bare grain,” cast into the ground to die, the resurrection is to a new life—to a life altogether new and fresh. The seed is quickened through decay into a new life. The old takes end in dissolution or death. The new emerges out of the soil in which the old has died. So in the case of this mortal body, the life which it is to receive through its dissolution in the grave may be new and fresh; as new and fresh as was the life which man's body had, before the condition of mortality attached to it at all. Nay, it may be a better life even than that. Its death makes it capable of a new life. Its existence under the law of death comes to a complete end. If it is to exist again, it may be under a new law of life. Death is not the destruction, but the quickening of it. “That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.”—*Rev. R. Candlish, D.D.*

[16524] Let us not be like them without faith, that think the bodies are lost for ever that are cast into the grave; like children seeing the silver cast into the furnace, think it utterly cast away, till they see it come out again a pure vessel.—*Sibbes*.

[16525] I have stood in a smith's forge, and seen him put a rusty, cold, dull piece of iron into the fire, and after a while he has taken the very same individual piece of iron out of the fire, hot, bright, sparkling: and thus it is with our bodies; they are laid down in the grave dead, heavy, earthly, but at the resurrection this mortal shall put on immortality; at the general conflagration this dead, heavy, earthly body shall arise living, lightsome, glorious: which made Job so confident, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, . . . and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."—*Fuller*.

[See Art. "Christ's Glorious Resurrection," Part IV., Division D of this Section.]

## VII. ITS ASPECT AS REGARDS THE JUST.

Raised to the hope of eternal glory.

[16526] The resurrection of the saints will be glorious and triumphant; to eternal life, Dan. xii. 2; John v. 29, with a nature perfected and transformed, and bodies spiritual, powerful, glorious, incorruptible, made after the pattern of Christ's glorified body, 1 Cor. xv. 44-54; Philip. iii. 21. The beginning of their perfect and eternal consummation of bliss, both in body and soul, in Christ's eternal and glorious kingdom.—*Rev. G. Bowes*.

[16527] When the graves shall pour forth their population, and all the righteous from Abel downwards shall start afresh into existence, they shall, like Moses on the mount, exceedingly fear and quake, yet will they have within them, at the same time, the knowledge that they have been begotten again into brotherhood of the glorious Being, whose coming has unsealed their prison house. And if conscience also beareth witness that they have not by continuing in sin profaned that Holy Name whereby they were called, the union between them and their Lord may well calm the mind and go far to banish all excessive affright.—*Bp. Woodford*.

## VIII. ITS ASPECT AS REGARDS THE UNJUST.

Raised to a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.

[16528] The resurrection of the wicked shall be "to shame and everlasting contempt," Dan. xii. 2; to "damnation," John v. 29. "Christ shall raise all" (says Caryl), "but what a difference!—the wicked shall be raised, by virtue of that power or dominion which He hath over all flesh, John xvii. 2. But the good are raised up, by virtue of that union which Christ hath with

their spirits, yea, with their persons."—*Rev. G. Bowes*.

[16529] Some shall be raised to the resurrection of damnation. They shall be raised only to be judged, to be condemned, to be punished with everlasting destruction. As unwilling as the soul was to depart out of the body at death, it will be much more unwilling to re-enter it; because now, alas! it will be fastened to the body no otherwise than as a malefactor to the rack. The body, formerly the soul's tempter to sin, and instrument in sinning, shall now be the scene and source of its torment! Oh, miserable creature! where may he look, or hope for rest?—*H. Grove*.

## IX. THE MORAL REASONABLENESS OF THE DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

If the body did not rise, man would, by dying, not simply enter upon a new stage of being, but exist as a different order or species of creation.

[16530] The general resurrection is no eccentric or gratuitous miracle, but the restoration to man of that completeness of identity which is impaired by death. If man's body did not rise, his moral history would have changed its conditions and character. The disembodied spirit might repudiate the weaknesses or excesses of the companion with which it had finally parted company. In point of fact, all men are to rise again with their bodies, and to give account of their own works. The complex being which acted here is to be judged hereafter.—*Canon Liddon*.

[16531] It appears that we may very fairly, and with good apparent reason, suppose that for the complete preparation of the soul for its future condition, and the attainment of full perfection, not only as a moral but also as an intellectual being, and for bringing out and developing all its faculties, and energies, and powers, a temporary union of it with a gross material frame is absolutely essential. While in this state, many of its capacities will be most strenuously exerted, and consequently also most perfectly developed, when they have to resist the impulse of some encumbrance which impedes their action. Such a condition, moreover, will serve to give the fullest relish and zest to the free exercise of those endowments, on the restraint on them being removed, just as a bird which has been entangled in a snare, and has for a long time been impeded by it wherever it has directed its flight, on getting rid of its burden feels more free and more agile than it ever did before, and mounts the air with more than treble its wonted vigour and spirit; and as the captive enjoys his liberty far more after his escape from prison than he ever did before he experienced the loss of it.—*G. Man*.

[16532] The body shall be awaked out of its



dead sleep, and quickened into a glorious immortal life. The soul and body are the essential parts of man ; and though the inequality be great in their operations that respect holiness, yet their concourse is necessary. Good actions are designed by the counsel and resolution of the spirit, but performed by the ministry of the flesh. Every grace expresses itself in visible actions by the body. In the sorrows of repentance it supplies tears, in fastings its appetites are restrained, in thanksgivings the tongue breaks forth into the joyful praises of God. All the victories over sensible pleasure and pain are obtained by the soul in conjunction with the body. Now it is most becoming the Divine goodness not to deal so differently, that the soul should be everlastingly happy, and the body lost in forgetfulness ; the one glorified in heaven, the other remain in the dust. From their first setting out in the world to the grave they ran the same race, and shall enjoy the same reward. Here the body is the consort of the soul in obedience and sufferings, hereafter in fruition. When the crown of purity or palm of martyrdom shall be given by the great Judge in the view of all, they shall both partake in the honour.—*Bates*.

#### X. ITS BIBLICAL PROOFS AND ENUNCIATIONS.

[16533] Biblical teaching affords with regard to the future life the simplest, most connected, and intelligible reading of many phenomena of this present life which are hieroglyphics to the science of the senses. Revelation indicates *future* correlations and conservations of existing forces, which we now know in part, but which we are not yet able to comprehend in a perfect science of life. The biblical doctrine of the future state is the logical conclusion of tendencies and laws whose operation within the limits of this present life is a matter of positive knowledge.—*Newman Smith*.

#### XI. NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION BODY.

[16534] We may conjecture that the nature of the resurrection body, in which we shall be equal with the angels, will be of this kind, that the nutritive life will then be laid aside altogether, and the sensitive, or excito-motor system, become as much higher than it is now, as the animal is now above the plant. In the plant, we see nutritive life only, with the absence of all organs of intelligence. In the angel, at the other extreme, there are the organs of intelligence in their highest degree, with the entire absence of the nutritive life. Our first parents fell, through the desires of the nutritive system, as well as the weakness of the excito-motor. In the resurrection body there will be no nutritive system at all ; no appetite or desire of food through which they can be tempted ; and the nervous system, which we have reason to think will be restored to us, will become, as it ought to be, the organ of

the intelligence—an intelligence purified from carnal desires, and filled with the love of God.—*J. B. Heard*.

[16535] As far as the human form excels the fish or reptile, as far as the noonday sun outshines the obscure star, so far shall the resurrection glory eclipse that of our present frame. Although it has been for ages the masterpiece of God and the wonder and model of art, yet it has no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth.—*J. Graham*.

[16536] The resurrection body will be so constituted by the almighty power of God that it shall have no element or possibility of decay. Gold will resist acids to a certain point, but may be dissolved by heat or even held in invisible solution. Diamonds are durable, but may by fire be melted as wax or be corroded by time ; but the texture of the glorified body shall be incorruptible, indissolvable, and permanent as the will of God, who makes and upholds it such. What a release from the thousand ills that flesh is heir to does this imply !—*Ibid*.

[16537] Wherever the soul may will to be, there it will be able to be : hence the body will not be a prison, but, on the contrary, a *free* home, for the soul. The body will be the perfect servant of the soul : hence it will be capable of instantly following, and keeping pace with, all the outgoings of imagination and thought. The law of love, whereby we live *in* those on whom we fix our heart, will be perfectly reflected in the body. The indwelling of soul in soul will be also an indwelling of body in body. And in this each will find his due place—so that, even as the Church of Christ here forms but one body with many members, thus also, hereafter saved humanity will form but *one* organic body, whereof we shall all be members, each in his place. And of this organic whole, the head, the focal point, the sun, will be Christ Himself. As our souls will eternally live of His life, so our bodies will eternally shine in the radiance of His glorified body.—*Schöberlein*.

[16538] Our bodies are not mere caducous husks, to be thrown off when the soul is ripe. But nature and the kingdom of God, the rational soul and the human body, belong normally and essentially together. When the one is transfigured, the other is transfigured. And when, at the goal of moral development, they are risen to integral unity, then they persist, through eternity, as intimately united as form and substance, light and colour.—*Ibid*.

[16539] God can bring wonderful æsthetic effects out of simple elements and combinations. The pearl is formed of the gross substance of the oyster and its shell ; the diamond is but another form of coal ; and all the precious stones but clay. Yet how lovely their lustre, and with what varied hues of light they sparkle and shine ! All the enchanting beauty and odour of flowers are produced by arrangements of simplest

elements. The indescribable beauties of cloud and rainbow, and sunrise and sunset, are produced with a touch of the infinite Artist's hand by light acting on moisture. And if matter is capable of *such* glory in this initial stage, what grace, what symmetry, what glory may it not be made to exhibit in the new and perfect creation, and in that glorified body, which shall be its climax of grace and beauty! There are countenances moulded of matter, but so lit up with candour, love, and intelligence, that their beauty at once strikes and charms our heart. What shall be the lofty beauty, the finished grace, the radiant glory of the glorified bridal Church (1 John iii. 2).—*J. Graham.*

## XII. THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION IN ITS BEARING ON OUR OWN.

[16540] The resurrection came by Christ, in exactly the same manner as death had come by Adam. Now we know that death came by Adam as the representative of human nature; and we, therefore, infer that the resurrection came by Christ as the representative of human nature. Retaining always His Divine personality, the second person of the Trinity took our nature into union with His own; and in all His obedience, and in all His suffering, occupied this nature in the character, and with the properties, of a head. When He obeyed, it was the nature, and not a human person which obeyed. When He suffered, it was the nature, and not a human person which suffered. So that, when He died, He died as our head; and when He rose, He rose also as our head. And thus—keeping up the alleged parallel between Adam and Christ—as every man dies because concerned in the disobedience of the one, so he rises because included in the ransom of the other. Human nature having been crucified, and buried, and raised in Jesus, all who partake of this nature partake of it in the state into which it has been brought by a Mediator, a state of rescue from the power of the grave, and not of continuance in its dark dishonours. The nature had most literally died in Adam, and this nature did as literally revive in Christ. Christ carried it through all its scenes of trial, and toil, and temptation, up to the closing scene of anguish and death; and then He went down in it into the chambers of its lonely slumbers; and there He brake into shivers the chain which bound it and kept it motionless; and He brought it triumphantly back, the mortal immortalized, the decaying imperishable, and “I am the Resurrection” was then the proclamation to a wondering universe.—*Rev. H. Melville, B.D.*

[16541] When the time shall come, that the saints shall rise out of the dust, they shall be raised by Christ, as their head, in whom the effective principle of their life is. “Your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. iii. 3). As when a man wakes out of his sleep, the animal spirits seated in the brain, being set at liberty by the

digestion of those vapours that bound them up, do play freely through every part and member of the body; so Christ, the believer's mystical head, being quickened, the spirit of life, which is in Him, shall be diffused through all His members, to quicken them also in the morning of the resurrection.—*J. Flavel.*

[See Art. “Christ's Glorious Resurrection,” Part IV., Division D of this Section.]

## XIII. CHRIST'S PREPARATIVE TEACHING ON THE SUBJECT.

Both by verbal statement and visible proofs.

[16542] “Ye do err,” said Christ to the Sadducees, “not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.” Here, first, He dismisses the question of its possibility by placing it at once in the hands of Omnipotence. Secondly, He places around the doctrine a guard of Divine declarations; thus reminding us, that if God has said the dead shall be raised, the event is as certain as if it had already occurred and become matter of history. And, thirdly, He alleges, as a reason for the event, the relation which God sustains to His people—“He is their God:” and is bound, therefore, by a pledge voluntarily given, to do everything for them essential to their well-being. But the restoration of their bodies is essential to the integrity of their nature: then His faithfulness is pledged to restore them. Besides, He is the God of the *living*. But a constituent part of their nature is held in captivity by death: then, to vindicate His title as their God, He must effect the redemption of the body, and replenish it, in common with the soul, with immortal life. Agreeably to this declaration, the Saviour elsewhere affirms, “This is the Father's will, who hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again at the last day.” He was commissioned by the Father to accomplish the work of redemption, in a manner worthy of Him whose peculiar distinction it is, that “His work is perfect.” He holds Himself responsible, therefore, for the reproduction of the bodies of all His people: He has set His seal upon each of their graves; and, of all that He holds in trust, He declares that He will lose, not merely not one but “nothing”—not a fraction—not a particle essential to one of the bodies of His saints. During the short period that He Himself remained in the grave, He held His person dishonoured by the bondage; and, till the morning of the resurrection arrive, He regards His people as dishonoured: the completion of His engagement, and the perfection of His reward, require that “of all which have been given Him He should lose nothing.”—*Rev. J. Harris, D.D.*

## XIV. ST. PAUL'S ARGUMENTS ON THE SUBJECT (1 COR. XV.).

1 His threefold proofs from already received doctrine.

[16543] There were some among Paul's Corin-

thian converts who called in question the resurrection of the dead, either affirming that it was already past, assigning to it a spiritual meaning—a resurrection from dead works; or maintaining that it would never occur—that it was an impossibility. Now, the apostle adduces three arguments in proof of the resurrection. His *first* and chief argument, upon which he puts the greatest stress, is that derived from the resurrection of Christ. “If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen.” And if this be the case, Christianity rests on a false foundation; “your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.” In testifying to the resurrection of Christ, “we are found false witnesses of God.” But we have the most convincing proofs, from numerous and unquestionable witnesses, that Christ has risen from the dead; and this His resurrection is a proof and pledge of ours. His *second* argument is, that if there be no resurrection and no future state, then those believers who have died are annihilated. “Then they also which have fallen asleep in Christ are perished;” their Christianity has done them no good; or rather, as it is inseparably connected with self-denial and suffering, it has augmented the misery of human existence: “if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” But this is a consequence which cannot be admitted: “Christ is risen from the dead, and is become the first-fruits of them that slept.” And, analogous to this, the apostle adduces a *third* argument, that if there be no resurrection, all the trials and sufferings of believers are useless; not the practice of the Christians, but the maxim of the Epicureans is correct: “Why stand we in jeopardy every hour? If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die”—an inference which is certainly to be rejected with horror. “Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners.”—*P. Gloag.*

## 2 His analogical reasoning.

[16544] With reference to the question, “How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?” (1 Cor. xv. 35-42), the apostle may be supposed to ask, Is it not answered now? Is not the analogy of the “bare grain” coming up with a new body enough to answer it? If not, then there is another analogy, or another argument, founded on plain facts, that should at least produce silence. Consider the variety that there is, as regards their physical framework or constitution, among the various material bodies within the reach of your cognizance. First, bodies on earth differ from one another as to the kind of flesh they possess (ver. 39). Secondly, heavenly bodies differ from earthly bodies (ver. 40). Thirdly, heavenly bodies differ among themselves (ver. 41). The subtle teachers with whom Paul had to reason would have made very light of any argument based on the corporeity of the inhabitants of the spiritual world. In the brighter and stiller of these

luminaries they saw matter becoming more and more unearthly, refined, and ethereal;—until, perhaps, in the great fiery body of the sun itself, the brilliant orb and proud lord of day, it reached the utmost perfection of rarity and purity of which it could be imagined to be susceptible. Now, to men familiar with such contemplations as these, the apostle’s argument is entirely to the point. He answers these “fools” according to their folly; and he answers them well.—*Rev. R. Candlish, D.D.*

## 3 Summarized force of arguments.

*Apert from the resurrection we can have no spiritual life at all, either here or hereafter.*

[16545] The resurrection for which Paul pleads is the resurrection which virtually includes in it the whole life of the believer, in this world, in the intermediate state, and throughout eternity. The apostle is not merely arguing about an event that is to happen at the last day. If that were all, the matter might seem of minor consequence. The resuming of our bodies may be the signal and the occasion for a large accession of glory and blessedness. Still, if it were viewed as an isolated incident in our history, and if otherwise, apart from it, our spiritual life in God’s favour and likeness were secure to us, the necessity for making so much of it as Paul does might not be very apparent. But the whole drift of the apostle’s reasoning is to show that whatever spiritual life we have, now or hereafter, we must accept as resurrection life;—for it is the resurrection life of Christ that we accept. And into that life—into fellowship and participation with Him in that life—we enter, when the Spirit, working faith in us, unites us to Him. Our resurrection life then begins; we “are risen with Christ” (Col. ii. 12, and iii. 1). And it goes on unfolding and developing itself before our death, and after our death, until at last, in the most exact and full sense, as to our whole person, body as well as soul, the resurrection life of Christ becomes ours. Thus it is a resurrection life throughout.—*Ibid.*

## XV. THE COMFORT OF THIS SUPREME HOPE OF CHRISTIANITY.

[16546] Christ’s first coming was the expectation of nations; His next is the expectation of Christians. “Look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke xxi. 28). Our eyes are still dropping in this valley of tears; but we look for the precious beams of the Sun of Mercy, that shall dry them up. No Jew did ever more earnestly wish for the jubilee; no servant so desireth the end of his years; no stranger so longs to be at home; no overladen soul so groaneth for ease; no soldier so heartily contendeth to have his wars determined with conquest, as the saints expect the promise of the coming of Jesus Christ. It is the strength of their hopes, the sweet object of their faith, in the midst of all sorrows; the comfort of their hearts, the heart of their comforts, the encouragement of their wearied spirits, the life of



their encouraged souls, the continual period and shutting up of their prayers.—*Adams*.

[16547] The hope of future good is always a cause of present comfort (2 Cor. iv. 14, 16). The hope of the future resurrection was the source of strong consolation to—(1) the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as that which bare up His soul in the hour of death (Psa. xvi. 9, 10); so was it with (2) the ancient martyrs and heroes of the faith, who refused to accept of deliverance, "that they might receive better resurrection" (Heb. xi. 35); and with (3) the early Christians (1 Thess. iv. 18; 1 John iii. 2); and so is it ever (4) with God's saints in the midst of life's many troubles (Job xix. 25; Rev. xx. 6). (5) With the bereaved (John xi. 23). (6) With all in the prospect of death (Psa. xlix. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56). (7) With those who serve God here, and seem to gain no reward (Luke xiv. 14).—*Rev. G. Bowes*.

#### XVI. THE TRUE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY AND ITS POSITIVIST COUNTERFEIT.

Immortality implies the personality of the resurrection life, and the notion of it in any other sense than this is misleading if not meaningless.

[16548] To use the word as designating the perpetual succession of the race is to accommodate it to express but one element, and that not the main element of the idea; but suppose you add to this perpetuity of the succession of life, the ever accumulating results of life, the works and the thoughts of one age living on to the next, and marking in each case the resumption of the thought transmitted and of the work unfinished, you have the immortality of work and the immortality of mind in the sense of uninterrupted labour and surviving conceptions, the agents meantime absolutely perishing. This is the immortality which finds favour with the modern Sadducee. We say at once that it reveals a noble and inspiring truth. But to make it the definition of immortality is an afterthought. The definition is born of an exigent scepticism.—*E. Jenkins*.

[16549] Immortality in the old and rational meaning is the first impression; its goings forth have been from the beginning of human life. Men have always loved it; the rudest have clung to its promise; it has wandered over the world and through the ages, assuming the shapes impressed upon it by the fancies, the passions, and the yearnings of mankind. But it has always meant, alike in its higher hopes and in its simple dreams, not the hereafter of matter in other forms, not the future of time and of progress, but the after-destiny of the individual life. What becomes of me and of mine? is the universal because the natural question of the dying and the bereaved. It is ungenerous to put upon this question the stigma of selfishness; nay, the accusation is wanting in philosophy as

well as charity. The immortality of race and of progress may possibly sustain the ardour of an intellectual enthusiast, but the thought is too remote, too refined, to touch the ordinary human being. The world could never be the better for it. To the uneducated mind it is unreal and untrue.—*Ibid*.

[16550] Our modern rationalists, finding the sentiment of immortality and discovering in it an ennobling inspiration, dismissed from it the survival of death as unworthy of scientific notice, and substituted the undying history and works of the human mind. The teaching of the Scriptures proclaims the continuity of the work and the grave responsibility of the worker resulting therefrom, but it chiefly concerns itself with the fate of the worker when he shall have disappeared to render his account to the Master and judge of work. Instead of burying or dissolving for ever the wonderful faculties which have ceased to work with us, the doctrine of Christ makes them alive for evermore. We follow the mind into other fields of responsibility and labour, where the unknown capacities of genius and of virtue will have infinite freedom for growth, for service, and for companionship.—*Ibid*.

#### XVII. THE UNIVERSALITY OF ITS ANTICIPATION.

I The traditions of all nations agree that the expectations of man are not bounded by the grave.

[16551] The Sheol of the Hebrews, the Amenethes of the Egyptians, the Hades, Erebus, and Tartarus of the Greeks, the Patala of the Hindus, the Dowzank (?) of the Persians, all point to the same truth, that man does not wholly die. Not to speak of such word-quibbles as the immortality of the race, which is only what man has in common with all organic life, the immortality of the individual was the point of conjecture which they wrestled with, like Jacob with the angel till the breaking of the day, unwilling to let it go, yet unable to wring from it a definite meaning. They sat before the grave, like the women who watched at the holy sepulchre, unable to roll away the stone, for it was very great, yet unwilling to think that behind the stone lay only dust and corruption. Christ, it is true, has brought life and immortality to light by the gospel, but there were watchers before the dawn, those who wished for the world's Easter Day before the day had fully come. Now men cannot look for a thing without forming some conception as to how it is to be brought about. Hope will have its forecasts, though they often prove fallacious. But as even a mistaken hope is better than none at all, we must think with respect even of the Indian's dream of heaven in some happy hunting ground, or the Egyptian hope of the resurrection of mummies, after a general conflagration at the end of a great cycle.—*J. Heard*.

- 2 The inmost longing of every human heart is not for an unknown and untried future happiness, but for a beautified and unalloyed restoration of what has already been.

[16552] We do not care for substitutes for what we have lost ; what we want is a resurrection of our dead loves, our past joys. We feel safer and surer with what we have already experienced. The hope that is set before us in the gospel appeals to this universal human feeling. It is not altogether a new heaven and a new earth that are to arise from the conflagration and ashes of the old ; but a place prepared by Him who wears our nature and knows our experience, filled with objects long endeared to us, and furnished with delights which we have already enjoyed in part, and learned from that foretaste to long for the full fruition. It is no new creature, no strange being, forgetful of the past, soaring out of the power and memory of the beautiful affections of the earthly home to the ethereal fellowship with God and angels, that will be raised from the dust to dwell in that new earth, and under these new heavens, but the friend we loved here, whose mortal form and human love will put on immortality.—*H. Macmillan.*

[16553] The alchemists of old believed that in the embers of all things their primordial forms existed, and that therefore they could create the rose with all its green foliage and crimson blossoms complete from its own ashes, but without the bloom and fragrance—a delicate apparition like the ghostly downy head of the dandelion that springs up where the golden sun of the flower had set. But a more cunning Alchemist will restore from the ashes of our beloved dead the old human form in all its human perfection, the self-same being with whom on earth and in time we took sweet counsel, transfigured, glorified, but still unchanged in all essential elements ; the glorious influences of the eternal life only quickening and deepening within its chambers of imagery the earthly and mortal pictures of the heart. In the highest and fullest sense shall beauty then be given for ashes ; and the revelation of a glory that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, shall be seen in the “little dust that here we over-weep.”—*Ibid.*

- 3 The truth of immortality is in accordance with all the natural instincts and yearnings of our souls.

[16554] The miracle and the mystery of our waking from nothing to consciousness has undoubtedly once occurred ; and Revelation asserts that it will be repeated, and in a higher form, from the nothingness of the grave. Our love demands a hereafter ; it creates its own immortality. He who made the union of hearts here more powerful than the attraction of star to star, more beautiful than the blossoming of flower to flower, more precious than the highest flights

and attainments of intellect, must grant the reunion, having made the union so sweet.—*Ibid.*

[16555] This universal belief, this anticipation of immortality, by mankind must have arisen either from the deductions of reason based upon these anticipations, or from some ancient form of Revelation. If from reason, then, at least, it cannot be declared an unnatural and repulsive opinion ; and if reason be the voice of God in man, then possibly this belief may have God for its author in the most primary sense. It seems to force itself, in this character, upon the unsophisticated nature of man as one of his deepest intuitions, his most ancient convictions. If the notion originated in Revelation, it has God for its author, and thus comes before us an article of belief invested with the Divine authority. Which alternative will the deniers of the doctrine choose ?—*W. Barker.*

[16556] The belief in immortality seems to be inextricably interwoven with myself. Assert that my instinct of immortality misleads me, and you destroy my main, if not my sole, criterion of truth. If that instinct deceives me, may not others ? May not all ? I am driven to universal disbelief, to have no creed but doubt.—*J. Gregory.*

[16557] When André Chénien learned that he would have to lay his head under the knife, feeling that flood of ideas, of poetic sentiments, boiling within him, which he would have given to the world, he raised his hand to his forehead exclaiming, “Still, there is something here.”—*Prof. E. Naville.*

#### XVIII. METHOD OF OLD TESTAMENT REVELATIONS CONCERNING IMMORTALITY.

[16558] In the hardest period of the Mosaic administration there were doors of entrance into the unseen world of which faith, as now, possessed the key, and admitted those who desired a better country, that is, an heavenly (Heb. xi. 16). Those who did not desire a better country, who minded earthly things, and were satisfied with what earth afforded them, were able to believe that earth was the sole habitation of man, and that human life was an active consciousness, temporary and passing in the individual, and perpetuated in successive generations ; in harmony with the Epicurean motto, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” The materialist, who makes a great noise in our own day, as if the scientific denial of man's immortality were the slowly educed result of ages of research, has a very long ancestry. He meets us frequently in the graphic descriptions of David and his brother poet Asaph, and in the meditations of Job. Here is a portrait, and it is a family likeness of all the tribe : “Their strength is firm ; they are not in trouble like other men, neither are they plagued as other men ; and they say, How doth God know, and

is there knowledge in the Most High?" So Asaph. A few strokes from David will finish the sketch: "Men of the world, which have their portion in this life, their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names." In justice to the holy psalmists who have left us this picture we should place beside it the contrast of their own life: David adds, "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness;" and Asaph, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee; my heart and my flesh faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."—*E. Jenkins.*

[16559] The word rendered life (Gen. ii. 7) is in the original plural, חַיִּים [Chayyim], and used here by the Holy Spirit, not merely for the idiom of the language; because, whatever be the idiom of other languages, it is the undoubted idiom of the sacred language to represent things as they are, which it cannot do, if it were to express an attribute of unity by a word carrying in it the idea of plurality; and not used for want of a singular noun, because it frequently occurs in the singular number: but it is here used to express an attribute which distinguished the soul from the body; for the text says, that the body had but life, or was living, in distinction to the soul which had lives. Now the soul which hath lives must of necessity have more than one—the present life can be but one—therefore the soul hath another life—and another life being not the present, must of necessity be a future—and a future life, or the soul's continuing to exist after the dissolution of the body, being what is meant by the immortality of the soul; in this text, therefore, it is, as expressly as words can speak, revealed, that the soul of man is immortal. And how could the Holy Spirit have laid this doctrine open to the Jews in a plainer manner than by revealing that the soul which the Lord God breathed or infused into the body of Adam, was not made up of frail materials, and liable to be dissolved, but did continue to exist after its separation? And whilst the Jews understood their own language, how could they be ignorant of a doctrine laid open to them in so plain a manner? And, besides this reasoning drawn from the meaning of the words, there is an infallible authority which hath fixed their meaning, and thereby unanswerably proved, that the reasoning drawn from them is just. St. Peter speaking by the same Spirit of God which spake in Moses hath proved that David foretold the resurrection of Christ, when he said, "Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, neither shalt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption." And then it immediately follows, "Thou shalt show me the path of lives." Now in consequence of Christ's not seeing corruption, He was to be shown the path of lives; and therefore the word "lives" here manifestly includes that life which Christ entered upon when He rose from the

dead—and this was certainly an immortal life: "For they who are accounted worthy to obtain a future world and the resurrection of the dead, cannot die any more." And consequently this is an infallible proof, that the word Chayyim is expressive of immortality.—*W. Romaine.*

#### XIX. THE EVIDENCE OF ITS TRUTH DISPLAYED IN THE LIFE OF HOLINESS.

[16560] It is said that the Roman conquerors of the world carried in their faces the secret of the triumphs of an imperial people. Much more do sincere Christians walk the earth with the mien and bearing of a race of immortals; although the rays of spiritual majesty which stream forth from the burning spirit within them, often do not but illumine the weakness of the body which yet encases it. Of such it is literally true, that "whether they live they live unto the Lord, or whether they die they die unto the Lord." They know that the few years of time are but a halt at the gate of eternity; and that true wisdom consists in practically understanding the ineffaceable distinction, which parts that which perishes before our very eyes from that which must last for ever.—*Canon Liddon.*

[16561] There are men in whom the resurrection begun makes the resurrection credible. In them the spirit of the risen Saviour works already; and they have mounted with Him from the grave. They have risen out of the darkness of doubt into the brightness and sunshine of a day in which God is ever light. Their step is as free as if the clay of the sepulchre had been shaken off; their hearts are lighter than those of other men, and there is in them an unearthly triumph they are unable to express. They have risen above the narrowness of life, and all that is petty, ungenerous, and mean. They have risen above fear, above self. This is the spiritual resurrection, or being risen with Christ; and the man in whom that is working has something more blessed than external evidence to rest upon. He has the witness in himself. The resurrection in all its heavenliness, and unearthly devotion has begun within his soul, and he knows as clearly as if he had demonstration, that it must be developed in an eternal life.—*F. Robertson.*

[16562] But for immortality virtue would be in danger of dying of despair; for human nature is so constituted as to need the stimulus of hope.—*J. Murphy.*

#### XX. THE PRACTICAL DENIAL OF ITS TRUTH DISPLAYED IN THE LIFE OF SIN.

[16563] The sense of immortality may be lost; the fact, whether for weal or woe, remains. The sense of immortality may be gradually or violently killed out of the soul by the errors of depraved intellect; or it may be buried alive



beneath the filth of animal indulgence. That soul must have parted company with its God which is indeed altogether enslaved to matter. It is the willing accomplice of a body whose degradations sap the springs even of physical life. It hastily shuts its eyes with sensitive apprehension against the unwelcome shadow, against the dreaded presentiment, of an actual immortality. Truly such a soul is in love with death. It is sinking lower and lower, deeper and deeper, into the moral and intellectual abyss. And as it sinks it forfeits, without a pang, the perception of its own powers, of its own reality, of the unity, and simplicity, and immateriality of its essence, of its past spiritual freedom from matter, of its possessing, of its being an indestructible principle of life. It welcomes any philosophy which will engage to overcloud the face of the Sun of Righteousness, or which will assist it to bury itself decently in the folds of sense, and to forget its true home and destiny while it feeds upon the husks that the swine did eat.—*Canon Liddon*.

[16564] Where men have believed themselves perishable as the beasts, they have acted like beasts.—*J. Graham*.

#### XXI. ARGUMENTS FOR HUMAN IMMORTALITY.

Without the doctrine of immortality there is an apparent and striking incongruity between the endowments and the condition of man.

[16565] The strongest natural argument for human immortality is founded on the inherent contradiction between man's mental powers and his opportunities for development in such a world as this. The Divine wisdom and veracity are peculiarly at stake in the matter. When we squarely face the phenomena, it seems impossible that a wise Creator should have imprisoned such a spirit as man's in such a tabernacle of flesh, unless there were higher designs regarding him than are unfolded in this short life. In the hopes and fears and aspirations, as well as in the actual accomplishments of the human race, there are the promises of far greater things in the future. The curve on which the individual as well as the race is moving is a parabola—a line which never returns upon itself, but for ever moves onward into space. There are "in man's nature evidences of a purpose stretching out into the limitless perspective of eternity."—*G. Wright*.

[16566] Consider the innate capacities of the human soul—its vast range of thought—its power of conceiving an unending futurity—its boundless aspirations—its longing affections and desires—above all, its capacity to form real and solemn, though inadequate, conceptions of God, of His universal government, of His kingdom on earth, and its relation to a wider and eternal administration;—may we not discover, in these facts of our own conscious expe-

rience, a prospective provision for a higher and nobler state of existence hereafter, such as the analogy of similar cases, known by actual observation, teaches us to regard and interpret as a natural indication of the Divine purpose in regard to it? May we not discern in the faculties, desires, and affections of the human soul, when compared with the limits within which it is confined in the present life, some indication of its being destined to another state of being? Its powers are manifestly so great, and capable of such indefinite progress, that the present life, short and uncertain as it is, seems to afford an inadequate field for their exercise, and looks rather like a season of preparation for another. May it not change its state at death, as the fœtus changes its state at birth, and may not death be only its birth into another world?—*Rev. R. Buchanan, D.D.*

[16567] We never feel, when a great intellect has risen to an original thought or a vast discovery, that it has now accomplished its whole purpose, reached its bound, and can yield no other or higher fruits. On the contrary, our conviction of its resources is enlarged; we discern more of its affinity to the inexhaustible intelligence of its Author. In every step of its progress we see a new impulse gained, and the pledge of nobler acquirements. So, when a pure and resolute mind has made some great sacrifice to truth and duty, has manifested its attachment to God and man in singular trials, we do not feel as if the whole energy of virtuous principle were now put forth, as if the measure of excellence were filled, as if the maturest fruits were now borne, and henceforth the soul could only repeat itself. We feel, on the contrary, that virtue by illustrious efforts replenishes instead of wasting its life; that the mind, by perseverance in well-doing, instead of sinking into a mechanical tameness, is able to conceive of higher duties, is armed for a nobler daring, and grows more efficient in charity. The mind, by going forward, does not reach insurmountable prison walls, but learns more and more the boundlessness of its powers, and of the range for which it was created.—*Channing*.

#### XXII. NATURE OF THE HOPE CONCERNING ETERNAL LIFE.

It is neither selfish nor neutral, but instinctively moral and generous.

[16568] The Christian hope of immortality cannot be an egotistic hope, because the affection does not centre upon an individual; it is in its very essence social; love enters into its very composition, and it looks forward to a communion of good as its very end and goal. Every one, indeed, can test the scope of this affection; and even the deaths we read of, or those which only imagination pictures, bear witness to the same. When anything beautiful in human character takes its departure from the world, what is the first ejaculation of the human heart but one for its immortality? Can

it perish—the priceless treasure of this personal life? The survivor says no: such being must go on being. He pursues the sacred form through unimaginable worlds—even the bodily form; for even the body is spiritual so far as it is a manifestation of the personal being; and he feels that, though carried away and shrouded in the mist which encircles human existence, it is safe somewhere. Being therefore would find out being, the one left, the one gone, drawn toward it by the current which penetrates all the spiritual creation, and the desire of immortality is as much for another as for ourself.—*Rev. J. B. Mozley, D.D.*

[16569] The individual desires the immortality, the perpetuation, the regeneration, the ascent and the glory of that human society with which he finds himself connected now, and aspires after membership with the great community in its state of exaltation. Christianity knows nothing of a hope of immortality for the individual alone, but only of a glorious hope for the individual in the body, in the eternal society of the Church triumphant.—*Ibid.*

#### XXIII. IMMORTALITY AN INTERPRETER AND TEACHER.

[16570] 'Tis Immortality deciphers man, And opens all the mysteries of his make: Without it, half his instincts are a riddle— Without it, all his virtues are a dream.—*Anon.*

[16571] The belief in man's continued existence after death has been and is under certain circumstances a cause of much suffering. It has interfered with the animal impulse which bids a man eat and drink, because to-morrow he dies; it has kept him in bondage to a feeling of responsibility, which turns out to have no foundation in fact; it has compelled him to continued effort, when effort was irksome or even intensely painful; it has made him persevere in that which seemed a duty in spite of ridicule or persecution, when the abandonment of that course might have insured a life of ease and undisturbed enjoyment. In the midst of toil, in wealth or success, it has carried him on to a time when the concerns of this life should give way before other and more abiding interests, and while it has kept death before him as an inevitable fact, it has taught him that not here can all things now crooked be made straight, or things mysterious and inexplicable become clear. All this, it is plain, cannot be done with a creature like man, except at the cost of a severe and protracted struggle, which must involve not a little of actual pain. So great also is human weakness that very possibly this belief may sometimes have clouded the judgment of men, may have led them into acts of harshness and persecution, or to paint a picture and supply details which existed only in their imagination. It may, in short, make a man so inert a disciple of that philosophy of comfort which Mr. Huxley propounds as the panacea for all human miseries,

as to furnish some apparent justification for the assertion that the last enemy to be destroyed is not death, but man's sense of his own immortality.—*British Quarterly.*

#### XXIV. FUTILITY OF OBJECTIONS URGED AGAINST THE DOCTRINE.

The denial of man's immortality involves a violation of the general normal human consciousness.

[16572] Harriet Martineau may make up her mind to an annihilation which her theories demand, but the unsophisticated human soul believes in its own survival of bodily death. We are not perpetrating the logical blunder of maintaining that we possess a present consciousness of a future existence. It is not only that the soul revolts at the thought, or even that the intellect cannot conceive the idea, but our nature appears to compel us to predicate of ourselves existence *after* any possible change. Let any one try to realize annihilation: it is impossible. Read every argument against immortality, and, maybe, you will admit yourself puzzled to reply; but despite your bewilderment you will feel that, even after what you have called *annihilation*, there must be *I*. Mathematics knows certain fractions that diminish *ad infinitum*, but never actually vanish. So you may imagine your consciousness—I—to dwindle indefinitely; but it never reaches the vanishing-point. At the very least there must be a dreamy, uneasy sense of loss—a self-contradictory consciousness of non-existence!—*J. Gregory.*

#### XXV. RELATION OF THE PRESENT TO THE LIFE TO COME.

The future life is a continuation of the life that now is.

[16573] Whatever changes may be involved in the extinction of the animation of flesh and blood, the personality of the spirit is intact. It does not become something else; in its separate state it is as closely related to its earthly history as the experience of to-day is united to that of yesterday, although a sleep divides them. Unless the responsibilities of the present life touch and shape the destinies of the future, practically there is no future; and the notion of immortality has no ethical value whatever. I cannot live again in the sense of living twice; the question is not whether the substance of which I am composed shall for ever belong to the kingdom of matter and of life, but whether the self within me whose identity through the matter changes of many years has never been touched, with a history and a memory uniting in one unbroken line of self the child who thought and understood and reasoned as a child, with the man who put away childish things, whether this hitherto unchanged self shall still preserve its connecting consciousness through the material changes yet to come. If the self expires there is no future for me; if the self lives on I am

hastening to join an innumerable company, the spirits of just men, once imperfect upon earth, but now made perfect, I am on my way to God, the Judge of all, who is not the God of the dead, but of the living. The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob did not create these three men to be apparition forms, endowing them with talents of intelligence for converse with Himself, and then dismissing them to extinction. Abraham was the friend of God. God is not the friend of a perishing animal; He is not the friend of matter when matter in its thousand evolutions happens to assume a human organization, and is destined to evolve something else. Abraham was the friend from whom Jehovah could not hide the counsels and purposes of His administration; who shared with him the burden and responsibilities of covenant; who was not less a party to the covenant after He had ceased to live on earth. Jehovah, whose promises Abraham had believed, was never seen upon earth, and when Abraham's earthly mission was fulfilled he, like his Maker, was not seen, but lived on, because God lived.—*E. Jenkins, M.A.*

[See Vol. I., p. 11, Section I., "Immortality of Man;" also Art. "The Christian Doctrine of Creation," Vol. IV., Part II., Division C, p. 320, and Art. "Christ's Glorious Resurrection," Vol. V., Part IV., p. 39, Division D of this Section.]

## XXVI. MEANING OF THE MILLENNIUM.

The prophetic period of a thousand years, spoken of in Rev. xx. 1-7.

[16574] The "Millennium" is generally used to denote the thousand years during which, according to an ancient tradition in the Church, grounded on some doubtful texts in the Apocalypse and other Scriptures, our blessed Saviour shall reign with the faithful upon earth after the first resurrection before the final completion of beatitude. Though there has been no age of the Church in which such views of the Millennium were not admitted by individual divines, it is yet evident from the writings of Eusebius, Irenæus, Origen, and others, among the ancients, as well as from the histories of Dupin, Mosheim, and all the moderns, that they were never adopted by the whole Church, or made an article of the established creed in any nation.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards).*

## XXVII. JEWISH ORIGIN OF THE DOCTRINE.

[16575] The doctrine of the Millennium is of Jewish origin. "The idea of a kingdom of Christ upon earth, which should endure for a thousand years, passed from Judaism into Christianity" (Dollinger). "Though the ancient Jews had no distinct knowledge of such an order in the resurrection as *first* and *second*, but only of the resurrection in gross and general, to be *in die judicii magni*, yet they looked for such a resurrection, wherein those that rose again should reign some time upon earth, as appeareth, Wisd. iii. 1-8." (See also 2 Esdras ii., the inter-

polation of a Jewish Christian.) "This opinion is here and there also dispersed in the Chaldee paraphrase, and in the Talmud, as of ancient tradition. . . . In fine, the second and universal resurrection, with the state of the saints after it, now so clearly revealed in Christianity, seems to have been less known to the ancient Church of the Jews than the *first*, and the state to accompany it" (Mede, "Works" ii. 943). The opponents of Chiliasm or Millenarianism, Jerome in particular, commonly raised the objection that Chiliasm was Judaizing. By Judaizing they appear to have meant interpreting the prophecies in a carnal sense. But Judaizing, in the sense of carrying on into the later dispensation the Divine truth of the earlier dispensation, is not an objection to any proposed doctrine, but rather a necessary mark of its truth.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

## XXVIII. TENETS OF THE MILLENARIANS OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

[16576] About the middle of the fourth century the Millenarians held the following tenets: (1) That the city of Jerusalem should be rebuilt, and that the land of Judæa should be the habitation of those who were to reign on the earth a thousand years. (2) That the first resurrection was not to be confined to the martyrs, but that, after the fall of Antichrist, all the just were to rise, and all that were on the earth were to continue for that space of time. (3) That Christ shall then come down from heaven, and be seen on earth, and reign there with His servants. (4) That the saints during this period shall enjoy all the delights of a terrestrial paradise.—*Encyclopædia (Edwards).*

[16577] The opinions of the Millenarians of the fourth century were derived from several passages in Scripture, which the Millenarians, among the fathers, understood in no other than a literal sense; but which the moderns, who hold that opinion, consider as partly literal and partly metaphorical. Of these passages, that upon which the greatest stress has been laid is Rev. xx. 1-7. This passage the ancient Millenarians took in a sense grossly literal, and taught that, during the millennium, the saints on earth were to enjoy every bodily delight. The moderns, on the other hand, consider the power and pleasures of this kingdom as wholly spiritual, but they represent them as not to commence until after the conflagration of the present earth. This last supposition is, however, a mistake, as the very next verse but one assures us; for we are there told that "when the thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth;" and we have no reason to believe that he will have such power of such liberty in "the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."—*Ibid.*



## XXIX. OBJECTIONS URGED AGAINST THE EARLY CHILIASTIC VIEWS.

[16578] With regard to the opposition which was offered to the Millenarian opinions of the early Chliasts, we have to consider, first, whether the arguments of their opponents are really directed against the correct doctrine, or only against the perversion of the doctrine; secondly, whether the opponents of the doctrine, as correctly stated, may not have been led by the spirit of controversy to mix up the correct statement with the perversion. Thus Origen "attacked severely the doctrine of a millennium." His words ("De Principiis," ii. 11) are (after speaking against the notion of corporeal delights), "Those, however, who receive the representations of Scripture according to the understanding of the apostles entertain the hope that the saints will eat indeed, but that it will be the bread of life. . . . By this food of wisdom the understanding is restored to the image and likeness of God, so that . . . the man will be capable of receiving instruction in that Jerusalem, the city of the saints." But these words are not inconsistent with the notion of a life, although a life on earth, in which the spirit will be so superior to the body that the righteous shall enjoy intercourse with the holy angels and union with spiritual beings. Origen was the first, so far as we know, who opposed the doctrine of a millennium. His work ("De Principiis"), just now quoted, was written at Alexandria, probably, *i.e.*, before A.D. 216.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology*.

## XXX. PECULIAR LIABILITY OF THE DOCTRINE TO PERVERSION.

[16579] It is easy to see that this doctrine of the millennium is very open to perversion and misrepresentation. The new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness are naturally, perhaps inevitably, described in the old prophetic language of temporal felicity, and such language is easily perverted so as to imply sensuality. There can be no doubt that some, perhaps many, held the doctrine in a carnal sense, but it is a misrepresentation to attribute that sense to such writers as, *e.g.*, Irenæus. His well-known passage concerning vines with ten thousand branches, &c., is in fairness to be interpreted by prophecies such as Isa. vi. 2, lxx. 21; Baruch iv. 36, and v., and by our Lord's words, Matt. xxvi. 27, with which he connects it, as also by his own words, "Through Him shall the righteous become accustomed to partake of the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy, in the kingdom, intercourse and communion with the holy angels, and union with spiritual beings."—*Ibid.*

[16580] The liability of this doctrine to perversion made peculiarly necessary the wise reserve which our Lord commands (Matt. vii. 6), and the exercise of such reserve is perhaps to be discerned in Origen's words, as quoted by

Whitby: "They were only some that held this doctrine, and that so clancularly that it had not yet come to the ears of the heathen" ("Philocalia," c. xxvi. p. 99). The absence of millenarian doctrine from the writings of the apostolic fathers may be probably accounted for by this consideration. It seems, further, as if this reserve had extended to the Apocalypse itself, and caused, in some degree, the lateness of its reception by the Church, with the doubts concerning its author.—*Ibid.*

## XXXI. GENERALLY RECEIVED OPINIONS CONCERNING THE MILLENNIUM.

That during the "thousand years" the Church will arrive at a state of unequalled prosperity, and that the condition of the world will be one of great happiness and glory.

[16581] The Jews shall be converted, genuine Christianity be diffused through all nations, and Christ shall reign by His spiritual presence in a glorious manner. It will be a time of eminent holiness, clear light and knowledge, love, peace, and friendship, agreement in doctrine and worship. Human life, perhaps, will rarely be endangered by the poisons of the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms. War shall be entirely ended, . . . all things consecrated to the service of God. The tempest will lose half its force, the lightning lose half its terrors; . . . in a word, "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea;" . . . and "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ."—*Encyclopædia (Edwards)*.

## XXXII. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

## 1 Generally considered.

[16582] The final judgment is not to *make* the destiny of saints, neither its elements nor grounds, but simply to *manifest* the grounds previously existing, and to *declare* the elements to be subsequently enjoyed, and to *exhibit* the moral connection which subsists, and must subsist, between such grounds and elements of destiny, and to do these things in the most public and august manner.—*W. Bathgate, D.D.*

[16583] Just as the title of the present epoch in which we live, "the day of salvation," gives preponderance to those things in it which make for salvation, so does the title, "the day of judgment," reverse the previous state of things, and lay stress upon its distinctive feature, as a time of searching moral investigation; a time of bringing into open manifestation the moral character of men; a time of award.—*R. Lorrimer*.

[16584] The present state is merely a theatrical show; the business of men a play; wealth and poverty, the ruler and the ruled, and such like things, are theatrical representations. But when this day shall have passed, then the theatre

will be closed and the masks thrown off. Then each one shall be tried and his works—not each one and his wealth; not each one and his office; not each one and his dignity; not each one and his power; but each one and his works!—*Chrysostom*.

## 2 Specially considered.

*The meting out to body, soul, and spirit of man their appropriate reward or punishment to all eternity.*

Viewed both as to judgment, present and future.

[16585] Here, the body as giving us our communication with this world, is the immediate and most obvious sufferer. Its pleasure and its pain are the result of the derangement of the right and wrong of the places of things without through man's disobedience, and therefore plainly invite to the one, and deter from the other. Thus reward and punishment lie at the very foundation of the correction of our corrupt nature; and these, through the body, in proportion as the body occupies the attention. The teacher inculcates truth on the mind of the child by chastisement and prizes. The ruler impresses his laws on the public mind by penalty and promotion. And the Judge of all mankind, at the last day, who has reserved the penal fire for the unsanctified body, is continually administering the foretaste of His vengeance, both on individuals and nations, by sending sickness, calamitous accidents, famine, pestilence, desolation, captivity, and utter destruction of whole cities and regions.—*Rev. R. Evans, B.D.*

[16586] The soul of course suffers through the body: less immediately in proportion as refinement has removed its affections from the sensual appetites; but more acutely and more lastingly as that which suffers is of a finer and more permanent texture. Shame, for example, is deeply felt by those who have no immediate and definite bodily cause for it, but feel it through the long train of association which a refined mind has interposed between itself and things without. . . . The affections of the soul require for their proper unfolding much experience in the body, and become more delicate and acute by exercise, so as to be excitable at a greater distance from the outward cause. Thus they become more capable of administering pleasure and pain, which here reaching the central man, and removed from their cause, and accumulated on their object, are more lively and of longer continuance. The interval of removal also leaves a wide field in which imagination may act, and conjure up shapes of exceeding delight or overwhelming fear. Hence the pain and pleasure felt by the body cannot be compared for intensity with the pain and pleasure experienced by the soul. How trifling are pain and sickness at their height of power of tormenting, when set by the side of shame, despair, and terror! how light the cry of bodily suffering compared with the deep groan of mental agony! Thus the Ruler of this world prepares us in soul

also with fearful premonitions of the everlasting shame, and weeping, and gnashing of teeth, to which He will consign the wicked in the day of final retribution.—*Ibid.*

## XXXIII. THE PREMONITIONS OF RETRIBUTION IN NATURE.

- 1 The fact in material nature of the connection of suffering with transgression.

[16587] Whoever transgresses its laws, child or sage, fiend or saint, pauper or prince, nature punishes. There is no respect of persons.—*Anon.*

- 2 The fact in material nature of the frequent adjournment of punishment to a future time.

[16588] Young men in early youthhood violate the organic laws of their physical constitution. For a time they are unconscious of any inconvenience arising therefrom. Years roll on, and the penalty of their former transgressions comes down upon them, in impaired health, sundry diseases, and a shattered constitution. In the language of Job, in old age they are made to "possess the sins of youth." An illustration may be taken also from the indolent husbandman. In spring he neglects the cultivation of his land and the sowing of the right seed at the right time. Like Solomon's sluggard, he watches the clouds and does not "plough by reason of the cold." He is not punished at once. Months roll away. The summer passes; then autumn comes and the desolations of winter are on him. All this comes as the penalty of his indolence in all its terrible pressure. Thus material nature suggests facts illustrative of future retribution for present wrong.—*D. Thomas, D.D.*

- 3 The fact in material nature of the power to adjust disturbances.

[16589] Nature is constantly balancing her accounts, restoring disordered things to their equilibrium. "In the long run," says a modern author, "Nature may be depended upon to balance her books. The sun draws no more water from the sea than the lakes are able to receive and the rivers to carry back. 'Immense as is the pressure of the atmosphere upon every hair's breadth of surface, we move about in it unconscious of discomfort, because our own powers of resistance have been exactly proportioned to the need. In hundreds and thousands of ways, many of which the curious mind of man is only just beginning to understand, this principle of equilibrium or balance asserts itself.'"  
—*Ibid.*

## XXXIV. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE SUPREME JUDGE.

Every essential attribute of office is contained in the fact that Christ is "perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting."

[16590] If we would determine who alone

seems fitted to bear the office of Judge of this creation, we appear to require the insupportable combination, insupportable, we mean, so long as you shut us out from the gospel, of the omniscience of Deity, and the feelings of humanity. We cannot dispense with the omniscience of Deity. We see clearly enough that no finite intelligence can be adequate to that acquaintance with every iota of human conduct which is essential to our being certain of the thorough justice of future retribution. But then neither can we dispense with the feelings of humanity. At least, we can have no confidence in approaching his tribunal, if we are sure that a difference in nature incapacitates him for sympathy with those whose sentence he is about to pronounce, and precludes the possibility of his so making our case his own as to allow of his deciding with due allowance for our feebleness and temptations.—*Rev. H. Melvill, B.D.*

[16591] One of the most beautiful of the arrangements which characterize the gospel, is that the offices of Redeemer and Judge meet in the same person, and that person Divine. We call it a beautiful arrangement, as securing towards us tenderness as well as equity, the sympathies of a friend as well as the disinterestedness of a most righteous arbiter. Had the Judge been only man, the imperfection of His nature would have made us expect much of error in His verdicts. Had He been only God, the distance between Him and ourselves would have made us fear it impossible, that, in determining our lot, He would take into the account our feebleness and trials. The hypocrite might have hoped to baffle the penetration of the man; the lowly and afflicted, conscious of frequent transgressions, of broken vows, of inconsistencies and backslidings, might have been appalled by the perfections of the Godhead. It would have been an encouragement to wickedness, had the Judge been mere man, and therefore liable to be deceived; it would have filled humble piety with dread, had the Judge been only God, and therefore not to be "touched with a feeling of our infirmities."—*Ibid.*

[16592] Our Judge is one who appeared as man upon earth, and who is man now, "with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature" in heaven. Now, how would great numbers of men who follow their wills in this world pursue through life an avaricious and selfish scheme, give all the strength of their faculties to gain worldly ends, but who do it all under a specious outside, and have explanations and justifications of their own conduct to themselves—how would these men feel if they knew that they had to undergo an examination and an estimate from a very wise, strong-minded, sagacious, and discerning man here in this world? Would they not immediately be in a state of most painful fear and apprehension? Would they not feel it but too certain, that when that man came to examine their whole conduct,

he would at once see through all the disguises under which they had cloaked their sins, that he would penetrate the wall of their self-deceit, draw their real aims from their hiding-places, expose their real motives, lay low their hearts to themselves and others, and would show beyond dispute what manner of men they really were? But if these men would be so afraid of a merely human judge, who brought with him a vigorous and acute understanding to estimate them, He who will judge them openly at the end of the world, He who does judge them now secretly, who estimates them, who measures them—He is more than man indeed, but He is still man. The man Christ Jesus now scrutinizes these men. Our Lord, in the days of His flesh, it is especially said, "knew what was in man." He knew what was in the minds of those who came to talk to Him, to ask Him questions, laying snares for Him. Before they spoke He saw into their hearts. He knew the secret motives upon which the Scribes and Pharisees acted, although these were covered by the most pious exterior. Their hidden thoughts were discovered to them. Well, then, He who knew what was in man in the days of His flesh, He who judged man then, knows and weighs man now in heaven, even the man Christ Jesus. Our hearts are open to One who is man; we are searched and tested by His infallible insight.—*Rev. J. B. Mozley, D.D.*

[16593] When you tell me that He is a Judge, and when you draw back the curtain and show me the great white throne and swarming myriads around it, waiting to be sentenced according to the things which they have done in the body; when you tell me that He is not only a Judge but a righteous Judge, so that He cannot be turned away from the rigours of justice—ah! it is this truth, held out in its plainness and in its power, which will put fear and dread in the breasts of multitudes, as they come up from their sepulchres, and make them call on the mountains and rocks to fall on them and cover them.—*Rev. H. Melvill, B.D.*

#### XXXV. INDIVIDUALITY AND COMPREHENSIVENESS OF THE JUDGMENT EXERCISED.

[16594] The judgment must be personal to every child of Adam. The prophecies that proclaim it are for the most part referable, not to detached nations or tribes of men, but to man as such; to have been born into this world is the sole condition for being the subject of this tremendous dispensation.—*Rev. Archer Butler.*

[16595] Though the countless millions of all that have lived, from the first man Adam to the very last infant that shall be born into the world, shall be assembled there, yet shall each one be as isolated from all the rest in individuality of judgment as though he stood quite alone at the bar.—*Ep. Waldegrave.*



[16596] In the corrupted currents of this world  
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
 And in worst times the wretched prize itself  
 Buys out the Law. But 'tis not so above ;  
*There is no shuffling : there the action lies*  
*In its true nature, and we ourselves compell'd,*  
*E'en to the teeth and forehead of our faults,*  
*To give in evidence.—Shakespeare.*

#### XXXVI. ITS IMPARTIAL EFFACEMENT OF HUMAN DISTINCTIONS.

[16597] Before His throne human decisions  
 and projects have reached their end. There  
 are no more masters and servants ; there  
 dignities and titles are mere empty sounds, the  
 crosses of orders and of honours a child's glitter-  
 ing toy. As the distinction between rich and  
 poor, distinguished and mean, ceases as unsub-  
 stantial, the words *spirited* and *spiritless*, *famous*  
 and *unknown*, lose their meaning. Here also  
 the poet's laurels vanish as dry leaves, and the  
 glory of human science fades away ; here also,  
 stripped of its splendour, is all that which the  
 world praised as the most splendid development  
 of the mind, yea, admired and idolized as worthy  
 of eternal crowns. Ye monuments of human  
 art, invention and power, sculptures, statues,  
 writings boasting of learning, poems which  
 stirred millions, temples, halls and palaces, ye  
 had your time ; but it is gone by. A storm now  
 sweeps off everything that is of this world and  
 born of its spirit, that it may clear the place for  
 Divine monuments. Only one thing avails, only  
 one thing is acknowledged ; and if this one thing  
 is found in the breast of a publican, the publican  
 is accepted, while the professed saint who is  
 without that one thing is rejected. If the  
 meanest day labourer possesses it, the day  
 labourer is exalted, while the king who does not  
 possess it is cast aside. For he can have no  
 representative. No nobility, no dignity, no  
 virtue, no work can make up for that *one thing*  
 where it is wanting. Everything depends on  
 this *one thing*, and this *one thing* constitutes  
 the whole difference between men and men  
 before the Lord.—Krummacher.

[16598] When you go to stand before God, it  
 will not be your dress, or your house, or your  
 titles, or your wealth, no, nor even your virtues,  
 however much commended here, that will give  
 you a title of entrance among the glorified.  
 Respectable sin will not pass then and there as  
 here. The honour, the nobility of it is now  
 gone by. The degrees, indeed, of sin are many,  
 but the kind is one, and that a poor, dejected,  
 emptied form of shame and sorrow.—H. Bush-  
 nell, D.D.

#### XXXVII. ERRONEOUS STANDARDS (MATT. VII. 1, 2).

[16599] Our standard of right and wrong is  
 usually very lenient to ourselves, but very strict  
 with reference to others. We shall be judged  
 hereafter, in some degree, by that standard ac-

cording to which we judge others here. The  
 fact has only to be pointed out, and at once we  
 feel the force of it. Our judgments of ourselves  
 are prejudiced : we make out as favourable a  
 case for ourselves as we can ; we bring out all  
 the extenuating circumstances, and plead our  
 own case with the greatest ingenuity. But our  
 dealings with others are very different. We ex-  
 hort them freely, we admonish them severely,  
 we condemn them without mercy. This is our  
 natural impulse, and it is one of the many things  
 which the Christian has to unlearn. His first  
 business is to condemn himself. "If we would  
 judge ourselves, we should not be judged"  
 (1 Cor. xi. 31). He learns to set the highest  
 standard for himself, but to make every allow-  
 ance for others.—Rev. R. Girdlestone.

#### XXXVIII. THE INEVITABLENESS OF THE JUDGMENT.

[16600] Not death itself is more inevitable ;  
 for death is but the commissioned officer of this  
 tribunal ; he exists only that he may lead us to  
 its footstool. Not heaven's promised happiness  
 is more assured ; for this is the sole portal of  
 heaven to man. Nay, the very being of our  
 God is scarcely a more fixed truth ; for even  
 His being is not more certain than His justice,  
 and His justice demands the judgment. What-  
 ever is uncertain, or undecided, or controverted,  
 this remains unquestionable ; God shall "come  
 to be glorified in His saints," He shall be "re-  
 vealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on  
 them that know Him not." To this all gathers,  
 in this all is consummated.—Rev. Archer  
 Butler.

[16601] With a view to that terrible scene of  
 trial, the whole world exists ; all the laws of  
 nature—the succession of day and night, o.  
 seasons and years—are but ministers to that  
 hour, speeding its coming, and preparing,  
 whether unto weal or woe, every soul among us,  
 for its irrevocable award.—*Ibid.*

[16602] For judgment we are born, for judg-  
 ment we flourish, grow old, and die ; Nature  
 herself dares not deny the certainty of retribu-  
 tion ; the gospel but confirms her conviction ;  
 for even in regions where the gospel has never  
 sounded, her voice speaking in all nations,  
 languages, and times, has proclaimed from pole  
 to pole that God shall judge His creature.—  
*Ibid.*

[16603] In the very being—the rational and  
 moral being—that God has given us, He has  
 inwoven the future judgment ; He has con-  
 structed our nature so that it demands this  
 award as its necessary completion. Our daily  
 life is one long prophecy of that day. In the  
 gloomy recollections of age, in the man of crime  
 who struggles in vain to crush a rebuking con-  
 science, in the youth who weeps the bitter fruits  
 of passion, in the very child who runs to hide  
 his conscious fault—in all alike is foreshadowed

the terrible decree of universal judgment.—*Ibid.*

### XXXIX. THE EQUITY OF THE JUDGMENT.

Every merciful allowance will be made, and no more required of any one than what might have been justly expected of him from the circumstances in which he was placed.

[16604] As there are amongst ourselves courts of equity, in which not so much the letter of the law but its spirit is acted upon, special weight being given to all peculiar or extenuating circumstances in each case; so will the judgment of the Great Day be affected by a variety of equitable considerations. God cannot lower His standard of right and wrong, nor can He have more than one principle of acceptance and rejection; but in the application of that standard and of that principle, the case of each individual will be judged on its own merits, and with due regard to everything which could in any way influence his moral and spiritual career. And what a number of circumstances there are by which a man's life is affected. The place of his birth, whether in a Christian or a heathen country; the time of his birth, whether in a time of spiritual opportunities or not; the natural dispositions and constitutional peculiarities of which he finds himself the possessor on entering into the world; the training he receives from his parents and teachers, if he has any; the influence of friends and companions; the work on which he is employed; his opportunities of reading the Word of God or the book of nature; the special lines of thought and activity towards which his talents lead him; in a word, every modifying influence will be taken into account by the Son of Man. (See 2 Cor. viii. 12; Luke xii. 47, 48; James iv. 17; Rom. ii. 12; John xv. 22-24, iii. 18, 19).—*Rev. R. Girdlestone.*

[16605] Can ye think that when at the judgment there shall go forward an investigation of the deeds of benevolence by which Christians have proved the sincerity of their faith, none but the better classes of society, whose means have outrun their own wants, will be able to submit themselves to the appointed criterion? or that, whilst nobles may appeal to hospitals founded or sustained by their ancestral revenues, and merchants show how their purses, heavy with the gains of commerce, were always open at the cry of the needy, the virtuous peasant who has wrestled like a giant with poverty, and scorned, whilst there was sight in his eye and strength in his limb, to touch a stiver of the funds which belonged to the destitute, must shrink back as one unable to reply otherwise than in the negative to the question, "Hast thou given bread to the hungry, and covering to the naked?" He has given: he has been a giver in not having been a receiver. God has not granted to the wealthy the monopoly of benevolence, which should move them to great

liberality towards the indigent, lest they find themselves at last outdone in charity by the very poor whom they succour. You see that the man who endows an almshouse out of a well-stocked purse, has a formidable rival in almsgiving in the mechanic who struggles night and day to keep out of that almshouse. It is quite possible that he who reared the asylum, and put over it his coat of arms, may be far lower down at the last in the list of the charitable than he who, rather than claim the succour of that asylum, wore away old age in toil and privation.—*Rev. H. Melvill, B.D.*

### XL. THE TESTS OF THE JUDGMENT.

"They were judged every man according to their works" (Rev. xx. 13).

[16606] Though no man can be saved by his works, every man shall be judged according to his works. If he have believed upon Christ—and this is the single ordained mode of salvation—the sincerity of his faith will be proved by his works; and therefore, in being appointed to everlasting life, he will be judged according to his works. If he have not relied on the merits of the Saviour, the want of faith will be evidenced by the deficiency in works; and therefore will he also, in being consigned to everlasting misery, be judged according to his works. It is then quite possible that a man may be liberal to the necessitous, and not from the Scriptural motive, but from ostentation, or at best natural kindness; and assuredly his liberality shall not open for him that gate which is closed against all but true followers of Christ. But if a man be not liberal, according to his ability, to the necessitous, it is quite certain that he wants what alone will gain him entrance into heaven; and we may pronounce him excluded because he closed his ear against the cry of the poor.—*Ibid.*

[16607] There is a machine in the Bank of England which receives sovereigns, as a mill receives grain, for the purpose of determining wholesale whether they are of full weight. As they pass through, the machinery, by unerring laws, throws all that are light to one side, and all that are of full weight to the other. That process is a silent, but solemn parable to me. Founded as it is on the laws of nature, it affords the most vivid similitude as to the certainty which characterizes the judgment of the great day. There is no mistake, there are no partialities to which the light may trust; the only hope lies in being of standard weight before they go in.—*Southgate.*

[16608] The rule of judgment will be twofold: the law of eternal morality, to which our nature was originally adapted, and in obedience to which we should have found perfection; and the law of grace, brought in to suit our lapsed condition, and in compliance with which we may obtain salvation. These, as they are the only rules known to us now, will be the only

laws adduced then ; the consequence of which will be, that our works, our present conformity or nonconformity with these known principles, will constitute the great subjects of inquest. "By thy words shalt thou be justified," said Christ, "and by thy words shalt thou be condemned." While He declares that the formula of the final sentence shall run thus :—"Inasmuch as ye did it ; and inasmuch as ye did it not."—*Rev. F. Harris, D.D.*

[16609] On and on—  
Fast are we drifting to another world,  
A world of stern infallible results.  
Eternity is but Time's harvest-home,  
Futurity the blossom of to-day.  
What thou dost sow, in measure and in kind,  
That also shalt thou reap.—*Sir W. Partridge.*

#### XLI. THE VINDICATIONS OF THE JUDGMENT.

##### I It vindicates the government of God.

[16610] The Scriptures notify us of a grand assize, or judgment, when the merit of all His doings with us, as of our doings toward Him, will be revised ; and it appears to be a demand of natural reason, that some grand exposition of the kind should be made, that we may be let into the manner of His government far enough to do it honour. This will require Him to take away the cloud in regard to all that is darkest in our earthly state. Every perplexity must now be cleared, and the whole moral administration of God, as related to the soul, must be sufficiently explained. Sin, the fall, the pains and penalties and disabilities consequent, redemption, grace, the discipline of the righteous, the abandonment of the incorrigibly wicked—all these must now be understood. God has light enough to shed on all these things, and He will not conceal it. He will shine forth in glorious and transcendent brightness, unmasked by cloud, and all created minds, but the incorrigible outcasts and enemies of His government will respond — "Alleluia ; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, be unto the Lord our God ; for just and true are His judgments."—*Rev. H. Bushnell, D.D.*

[16611] It is of course necessary that the laws of God have penalties annexed to them. A law without a penalty is merely advice, and it is absurd to name it law. And it is equally absurd to suppose that God in His eternal and infinite wisdom annexed penalties without designing to inflict them, or threatened their infliction without any serious intention of executing His threatenings. A supposition like this must necessarily divest Him of all the moral attributes of divinity. Or should it be supposed that, after He had announced the penalty, He, on further reflection, concluded not to inflict it, though He at first fully intended to do so, this would divest Him at once of all the natural attributes necessary to Godhead. All such conceptions of God necessarily revolt the feelings of every refined and well-balanced mind. It is admitted that the

threatened penalty should not be more nor less than the crime deserves. But this must be left solely with God, whose word announces the truth on the subject.—*Rev. R. W. Lauder, D.D.*

[16612] Whence arises the present reward of virtue, but from the testimony of a good conscience? and whence the value of such a testimony, but from the conviction of responsibility, the sense of Divine favour, and the anticipations of futurity? No doubt there is present peace, too, from the due subjugation and control of the passions—the peace of a well-adjusted and well-governed mind. But this does not in the least degree explain the anomalous fact, that the man who has most effectually succeeded in such subjugation and self-government, should, under the administration of a righteous Providence, be the victim of severe and diversified sufferings ; while with many of a perfectly opposite character, everything prospers—light with hardly a shadow, sweet with hardly a drop of bitter. The matter of fact is many a time and strongly stated in the Scriptures themselves ; and it was at times to the minds of God's people—the devout observers of His ways—the occasion of deep and tempting perplexity. Thus the prophet was perplexed ; thus the psalmist was perplexed, so perplexed as almost to be driven to infidelity and atheism, till he got the key to the mystery. And what was that key? future retribution.—*Rev. R. Wardlaw, D.D.*

[16613] The moral law is, in its operation, a pledge and earnest—in its own essential nature, a transcendent prophecy of its own finality. As a living movement or germ, it foretells the beautiful flower and blessed fruit of perfection to be borne by every righteous man : for every wicked one, the outgrown freezing shadow, the poisonous life-destroying produce. And this twofold energy of law corresponds in its consummation with the twofold judgment of God—"who," as the apostle tells us, "will render to every man according to his deeds : to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life ; but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil."—*W. Jackson.*

[16614] To suppose that this moral order of things, *ὁ κόσμος οὗτος*, with its undiscerning confusion of good and evil, truth and falsehood, that this present *time*, *ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος*, with its unsolved discrepancy between the ideal and the actual, with its restless alternation of progress and declension, of rise and fall, heaving like the billows of the ocean, shall flow on and on for ever through a purposeless eternity—to suppose this would involve a denial of all teleology, a denial of the final triumph of goodness and truth.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[16615] If there be a providence, there must



be a law by which God governs mankind ; and if there be a law, there must be rewards and punishments : these rewards and punishments are not distributed in this life ; there must consequently be an hereafter, when they shall be justly distributed.—*H. Grove.*

[16616] The lot of the righteous is often such as we are assured the lot of the wicked shall be, and *vice versâ*. Nor can this matter be explained and justified on the assumed principle that virtue and sin are their own reward, for what then becomes of the truth that sin is pleasant to the depraved heart, and that its pleasures may be enjoyed (Heb. xi. 25), and that self-denial is required to abstain therefrom? (Psa. lxxxiv. 10; Luke ix. 23; 1 Cor. x. 19.) But further : How would such secret retribution answer the public ends or design of God's moral government, and vindicate His character and uphold the authority of His law? And let it be remembered, also, that much of that which is thus called the recompense of virtue and vice arises from the conviction that there is a future state. Take away that idea, and many a wicked man would cease to be troubled on account of his crimes.—*Rev. R. W. Laundis, D.D.*

## 2 It demonstrates the Divinity of Christ.

[16617] Hear carefully, ye unbelievers and doubters in our midst, who speak of the Lord as though He were merely a human rabbi, the "excellent one of Nazareth." Must it not deeply move and seize you how He at once soars so high beyond the poor measure of your so-called rational ideas of His person? Think only, He will determine the fate of the whole world ; He will determine to whom the reward of eternal life should fall, and to whom the award of death ; He will open heaven for the *one*, hell for the *other* ! And that He shall and will do this, is not said by what you would, perhaps, call an enthusiastic follower. It is He Himself who testifies it, He presents Himself to us in words which cannot be doubted, as the Judge of the world, and he who will not acknowledge Him as such, stamps Him—my God, as what does he stamp Him, despite all Judas kisses, Herodian flatteries, and Pharisaical promises? Oh, great day, when He casts aside the veil which still conceals from us His kingly countenance, and steps forth into view from His secret place. Heaven opens, and attended by thousands of thousands, who stand around His throne, He descends to earth in sublime, Divine splendour. Now no longer the *servant* of the Lord ; now the Lord of the house ; now no longer with a crown of thorns around His forehead, but with the crown of the universe on His head, and the sceptre, sword, and balance in His right hand. Now no longer the time of suffering, but the day of complete triumph, of eternal victory. His friends exult, filled with joy, to meet Him. His enemies—oh ! disappointment to their reckonings, crushing thunderbolt upon their systems of reason, fearful destruction of their lying wisdom—there they

stand, with their books, in which they have torn away the crown from Him ; with their sermons, in which they shrivelled Him into a mere wise man of Judea ; with their poisonous witticisms, scornful songs, and mocking comedies, in which they persecuted the people who bowed the knee to Him. There they stand, and now see at whom they have thrust, and perceive that the people trampled under their feet were right, and know that what was said on that subject in the Gospel was true ; and are made conscious that their pretended enlightenment was only darkness, and the highly-prized luminaries of their century were only false prophets and misleading meteors, whose philosophies were baseless and ruinous.—*Krummacher.*

## XLII. THE SOUL'S SOLEMN RETROSPECT OF LIFE AT THE LAST DAY.

[16618] The individual soul shall require to face its past life. Without a commanding view of it, the judgment pronounced upon the soul would be unintelligible to it. There will come a day when the long monotonous experience of spiritual life, whether of conflict with sin, or of self-indulgence in it, shall come to an end. A day will dawn different from any that has gone before, when our business shall no longer be that of moving forward in well-worn paths, but of standing still, of looking back over a finished life, and of being confronted with what we have made of our great opportunity. No essential experience will be wanting in the day of that retrospect. All your past life lies buried within you, and even now you feel it sometimes stirring in its sleep. It yearns for expression at times. Memories of childhood's days come to you, you know not how ; and their presence you can neither compel nor prevent. A hallowed fragrance of olden days ever and anon passes through your soul, and nature itself is seen to sympathize with the fact, in the fond earnestness and fullness of recollection with which the aged, as they prepare to enter upon their new sphere of life, gather up the past, and breathe the spirit and feel the air of days long since gone by, but temporarily forgotten in the bustle of incessant care. All this testifies to the fact that your whole life from childhood is stored up within you, and that it is not in your power either to command or to resist its presence. It obeys laws which you do not know. But if it comes to us thus spontaneously in sudden glimpses, and in odours wafted from afar, in our free moments, how much more fully must it do so when its most propitious circumstances are present, when life is set in the focus of sharpened instincts, unsophisticated convictions, and naked facts, and when the proofs of the judgment is upon us !—*R. Lorimer.*

[16619] In being judged, a man is to be thrown back, not on the bare recollection of his sins, but on all the circumstances and feelings in and with which they were committed. Not merely the sin will be remembered, but all the

then reproaches of conscience, all the light under which it was committed, all the self-deception exercised will be made plain, all the aggravations of the sin will come to view, and all the dreadful feelings that followed it will be renewed and deepened. Every sin of injury against others, against the feelings of others, against the interests of others in any way, will be connected with all the materials of compunction and remorse that preceded, accompanied, or grew out of it. And sometimes little circumstances, or what seemed little at the time, shall have extraordinary power, be invested with a world of feeling and of meaning. A single look, a single word, a circumstance that passed like a flash of lightning, shall have meaning and feeling enough connected with it to be dwelt upon for ever and ever.—*Rev. C. B. Cheever, D.D.*

### XLIII. THE STRIKING POWER OF MEMORY AT THE LAST DAY.

[16620] Events that had been effaced from the memory for years are now made to start into legibility. There are facts illustrative of this revival of incidents long forgotten. "I was once told," says De Quincey, "by a near relative of mine, that having in her childhood fallen into a river, and being on the very verge of death but for the critical assistance which reached her, she saw in a moment her whole life, in its minutest incidents, arrayed before her simultaneously as in a mirror, and she had a faculty developed as suddenly for comprehending the whole and every part. This, from some opium experiences of mine, I can believe. I have indeed seen the same thing asserted twice in modern books, and accompanied by a remark which I am convinced is true, viz., that the dread book of account which the Scriptures speak of, is in fact the mind itself of each individual. Of this, at least, I feel assured, that there is no such thing as *forgetting* possible to the mind. A thousand accidents may and will interpose a veil between our present consciousness and the secret inscriptions on the mind—accidents of the same sort will also rend away the veil; but, alike, whether veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains for ever, just as the stars seem to withdraw before the common light of day, whereas, in fact, we all know that it is the light which is drawn over them as a veil, and that they are waiting to be revealed when the obscuring daylight shall have withdrawn." And since nothing is forgotten, it seems certain that at the day of judgment not the least startling part of the proceedings will be a resurrection of long-buried sins.—*President M<sup>r</sup> Cosh.*

### XLIV. THE AWFUL ILLUMINATION OF CONSCIENCE AT THE LAST DAY.

[16621] Conscience shall awake on that day. Yes! conscience, once ill taught indeed, yet not silent, but now perchance overborne, smothered, quenched;—conscience shall then awake, and

with a fearful, a burning fulness of light and life and fidelity, plead guilty to every charge, and avow that every sentence is just.—*Ep. Waldegrave.*

[16622] Think what it will be for a man to sit surrounded by that ghastly company, the ghosts of his own sins! and as each forgotten fault and buried badness comes, silent and sheeted, into that awful society, and sits itself down there, think of him greeting each with the question, "Thou too? What! are ye all here? Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" and from each bloodless, spectral lip there tolls out the answer, the knell of his life, "I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord."—*Rev. A. Maclaren, D.D.*

### XLV. FAILURES WHICH WILL BE FINALLY CONDEMNED (LUKE IX. 26).

#### I. Conscious, wilful disobedience to the gospel law.

[16623] We are naturally so attracted by the gospel as the revelation of God's free grace and mercy, that we often forget another aspect of it. We forget that it, too, after its own manner, is a law. Christ is a higher and greater Lawgiver than was Moses, and His gospel is the more exacting, because His gospel is a more spiritual code than was that of the Pentateuch. It is a law of liberty, no doubt, because in Christ's household obedience is not wrung out of unassisted and reluctant human nature by the sole force of penal sanctions; but it is not a law of licence. The Christian, justified freely, is not free to do whatever his lower nature may desire. The Sermon on the Mount is just as much a part of the everlasting gospel as is the parable of the Prodigal Son, the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans just as much as the third, or the fourth, or the fifth. Now this lofty, pure, spiritual law is the standard by which we Christians will be judged—judged all the more certainly because, unlike the ancient Jews, we have been endowed with grace, that is to say, infused with spiritual light and force, for the very purpose of enabling us to obey. Surely, it greatly concerns Christians to bear in mind how our Lord taught that all judgment would be relative to the opportunities which men had enjoyed in this life—that to whomsoever much is given of him would much be required. Some early Christians at Corinth and elsewhere, who had been under St. Paul's teaching, but who had altogether misunderstood it, could not believe that they were thus under a moral and spiritual law. They thought that their new law of liberty consisted in a general licence to do just what they liked, provided only they experienced from time to time emotions of faith and love; but the apostle would not let them dream that fatal dream undisturbed—"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" To the Galatians he also said, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." And so

also our Lord foresaw that because works of mercy had been catalogued and manipulated among the later Jews, as if they could be weighed and measured by a mechanical formalism, therefore they would be afterwards discredited by the selfish and slothful among His own followers, and this, under the pretence of loyalty to a lofty kind of spirituality. When He described the day of judgment, who were, according to His representation, the lost? They were simply Christians—Christians who had failed to obey the gospel law of charity. They had not attended Christ present in the various forms of human suffering (Matt. xxv. 40-48).—*Canon Liddon*.

## 2 False, or merely outward religious profession.

[16624] Christ contrasted the practical religion of many a Jew in His day with that of a sincere servant of God. He reviewed the three main departments of religious effort—duty to other men, duty to God, duty to self. He began with almsgiving, which stood here for all the duties of charity towards our neighbour (Matt. vi. 1, 4). Then He went on to prayer, which here stood for all the duties of worship, reverence, and devotion which we owed to Almighty God (Matt. vi. 5, 6). And, lastly, He took fasting, which here represented every effort to place the lower instincts of our nature in subjection to the illuminated conscience, so as to preserve in a composite being like man's that harmonious subordination of matter to spirit in which His true excellence consisted (Matt. vi. 16, 18). Here, it might be noted, an act, good in itself, was rendered hollow and worthless by an unworthy motive. When God's glory and will was not in sight of, and the desire to have the praise of men took its place; when alms were given to secure a reputation for generosity, when prayers were said to secure a reputation for piety, when fasting was practised to secure a reputation for self-denial, then all was radically bad. The heart was eaten out of a good action by this impure and vicious desire for the praise of men. At the same time, those who did thus give alms, or prayed, or fasted, did beyond all doubt get a certain return for their expenditure. They sought human praise, and they had human praise. As our Lord said, more pathetically than severely, "they have their reward." This suggests a distinct view of the effect and operation of the day of judgment. The day of judgment will be a great day of discovery. It will unveil before our eyes many secret and unexpected excellences, and it will also unveil much secret and unexpected hollowness.—*Ibid*.

[16625] The aspect of the day of judgment as a day of discovery is especially needed in times and places where religion confessedly enjoys social ascendancy, and where, therefore, there are numerous motives for insincere profession. In this connection witness Italy at the latter half of the fifteenth century, when the Renaissance had eaten out all true Christian faith in

the souls of numbers of educated Italians, who, while showing a mere conventional attitude of respect for it, thought, felt, and, so far as they dared, talked and wrote like pagans. The Church was everywhere around them, strong with the accumulated strength of centuries, maintaining, to all appearances, an unbroken and unassailed supremacy, too secure to be much alarmed at sundry and distant mutterings of a coming storm which in the next century would break out beyond the Alps, or to be anxious at the disintegrating influence which deeply penetrated and pervaded her, and only careful to insist upon the traditional proprieties, upon the etiquette, so to call it, of religious language and action, but for the most part letting other things take their course. That was a situation in which insincere religious profession abounded as a matter of course, in which money was given, prayers repeated, and austerity practised with the view simply to satisfy the conventional requirements of the day. And such professions had their reward. But they had also to await the final verdict of Him who seeth in secret and rewardeth openly. And the same thing is observant in our own day within the limits of many a small, compact religious clique, every member of which is known to and carefully watched by all the others. He who knows anything of human weakness cannot fail to see how easily outward bearing and demeanour, so indispensable, so necessary, may become a very mask, with nothing true corresponding beneath. Great need have they whose duty it is to maintain an outward standard of conduct and language to think often and anxiously of the great day when all that is hidden shall be made known.—*Ibid*.

## 3 Non-confession of secretly convicting truth.

[16626] Superstitions, however grotesque, have their fanatical partisans and devotees; and is the religion which our Lord has brought from heaven alone to be without advocates or defenders? Are Christians to be the only people who so weigh and mince their words, who are so fearful of saying too much, that they say nothing at all in their Master's cause? No Christian who has the faith in his heart could keep it to himself with entire impunity, for it would soon shrivel up in his soul. You kill a conviction by saying nothing about it when occasion requires. You strengthen it by proclaiming it modestly, but fearlessly. And if we still hesitate to do what we might for the person and truth of our adorable Lord, let us think of that day of which He spoke. Let us think of the scene, transcending all words, transcending all power of imagination, when He shall come in His own glory and in His Father's, and with the holy angels. Think of the boundless exultation, of the unutterable woe, of the hopeless, inextricable confusion settling down at His word into order, into eternal order—the order of eternal day, the order of eternal light. How will it fare with us if His face, beautiful in its



ideal humanity, beautiful in its superhuman glory, be turned away from us as from those whom He was ashamed to own, because in the day of time we were ashamed of Him?—*Ibid.*

#### XLVI. THE GRACIOUS INVITATION OF THE JUDGE TO THE JUST.

"Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34).

"And these shall go away into . . . life eternal" (*Ibid.* xxv. 46).

[16627] The highest honour which the Romans bestowed upon their greatest captains was to grant them a day of triumph, and, in that, permission to wear a crown of grass or leaves, which withered the day following; but the triumph of the just shall be eternal, and their never-fading crown is God Himself. Oh, most happy diadem! Oh, most precious garland of the saints, which is of as great worth and value as is God Himself! Saporess, king of the Persians, was most ambitious of honour, and would therefore be called "The brother of the sun and moon, and friend to the planets." This vain prince erected a most glorious throne, which he placed on high, and thereon sat in great majesty, having under his feet a globe of glass, whereon were artificially represented the motions of the sun, the moon, and the stars; and to sit crowned above this fantastical heaven he esteemed as a great honour. What shall be, then, the honour of the just, who shall truly and really sit above the sun, the moon, and the firmament, crowned by the hand of God Himself, and that with a crown of gold, graven with the seal of holiness and the glory of honour? And this honour arrives at that height, that Christ Himself tell us: "He who shall overcome, I will give him to sit with Me in My throne; even as I have overcome, and sat with the Father in His throne."—*Bp. Taylor.*

[16628] "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." In a world where all is splendour, they shall yet distinctly shine—shine as suns for ever and ever.—*G. Harris.*

[See Art. "Heaven," of this Division.]

#### XLVII. THE TERRIBLE SENTENCE OF DAMNATION TO THE WICKED.

"Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41).

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (*Ibid.* v. 46).

[16629] The judgment of the ungodly is inflicted by the angels of God. In the present dispensation, Satan and his messengers are permitted by God to inflict evil upon the Church: but in the last day, instead of *inflicting* the punishment, they shall *share* it. The ungodly who are to be punished are regarded by God

as "the children of the wicked one," their spirits being so perverted that they have rejected the love of God; and that they have learned, more or less, to love evil for its own sake. Accordingly, they are to be sent, branded with the curse of God, "into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" "and the devil" shall be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. xx. 10). Throughout the Book of the Revelation the angels of God are represented as administering God's judgments upon the evil; and our Lord Himself tells us that "the Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire" (Matt. xiii. 41, 42); and again, "the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire" (vers. 49, 50, chap. xxv. 28-30).—*Rev. R. Girdlestone.*

[16630] The decision given by the Judge of all the earth is reserved until the last day. Then He speaks by the mouth of the Son of Man; and in setting forth the destiny of those who have accepted or rejected His love, He contemplates no further decision. There is no court of appeal from that judgment. No idea is held forth that the sentence will be remitted or modified. As there is no fear that the faithful shall fall in the world to come, so there is no prospect that the faithless and unprofitable shall rise. The day of change will have gone by. Humanity will have entered on its uttermost phase; and every individual will find himself, by the course of his earthly life, drawn into a destiny which is irresistible and cannot be reversed.—*Ibid.*

[See Art. "Hell," of this Division.]

#### XLVIII. FUTURE JUDGMENT IN RELATION TO THE HEATHEN.

[16631] It has been much disputed whether it be possible that the heathen should be saved without the knowledge of the gospel. Some have absolutely denied it, upon the authority of these texts which universally require faith in Christ: but to this it is answered, that those texts regard only those to whom the gospel comes, and are capable of understanding the contents of it. The truth, says Dr. Doddridge, seems to be this: that none of the heathens will be condemned for not believing the gospel, but they are liable to condemnation for the breach of God's natural law; nevertheless, if there be any of them in whom there is a pre-vailing love to the Divine Being, there seems reason to believe that, for the *sake* of Christ, though to them unknown, they may be accepted by God; and so much the rather as the ancient Jews, and even the apostles, during the time of our Saviour's abode on earth, seem to have had but little notion of evangelical truth (Rom. ii.

10-22; Acts x. 34, 35; Matt. viii. 11, 12). Saurin, Mr. Grove, Dr. Watts, and Mr. Newton favour the same opinion. Still, whether there *are* any such where the gospel has not penetrated, must ever be a matter of uncertainty; and the language of our Lord's commission binds us to send them the gospel as the only known means of salvation.—*Encyclopædia* (Edwards).

[16632] Is virtue, then, unless of Christian growth,

Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both?  
Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe,  
For ignorance of what they could not know?  
That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue;  
Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong.  
Truly, not I! The partial light men have,  
My creed persuades me, well employed may save;

While he that scorns the noonday beam, per-  
verse,

Shall find the blessing unimproved a curse.  
Let heathen worthies whose exalted mind  
Left sensuality and dross behind  
Possess for me their undisputed lot,  
And take unenvied the reward they sought.  
But still, by virtue of a Saviour's plea,  
Not blind by choice, but destined not to see.  
Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame  
Celestial, though they knew not whence it came,  
Derived from the same source of light and grace  
That guides the Christian in his swifter race;  
Their judge their conscience, and her rule their law—

That rule pursued with reverence and with awe,  
Led them, however faltering, faint and slow,  
From what they knew to what they wish'd to  
know.—*Cowper*.

#### XLIX. HEATHEN IDEAS OF JUDGMENT AND RETRIBUTION.

##### 1 Egyptian symbols.

[16633] Those strangely solemn pictures in the tombs of Egypt, which embody in vivid symbols the religious ideas of the nation four thousand years ago, teach us that in the infancy of the human race, the moral sense of men led them to anticipate a retribution after death. You see the soul arraigned before the judge; the assessors ranged on either hand to note the trial; the sacred balances of justice suspended to weigh the actions or the heart of the deceased in one scale, by the figure or emblem of truth in the other; on this side the herald waiting to convey the approved into the abode of the gods, on that side the executioner waiting to lead forth the condemned. Not the Pharaoh himself could escape this scrutiny after death.—*Rev. J. Thompson, D.D.*

##### 2 A Chinese view.

[16634] This terrace [the celebrated See-one's-home Terrace] is curved in front like a bow; it looks east, west, and south. It is eighty-one *li* [3 *li*=1 Eng. mile] from one ex-  
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treme to the other. The back part is like the string of the bow; it is enclosed by a wall of sharp swords. It is 490 feet high; its sides are knife-blades; and the whole is in sixty-three storeys. No good shade comes to this terrace; neither do those whose balance of good and evil is exact. Wicked souls alone behold their homes close by, and can see and hear what is going on. They hear old and young talking together; they see their last wishes disregarded and their instructions disobeyed. Everything seems to have undergone a change. The property they scraped together with so much trouble is dissipated and gone. The husband thinks of taking another wife; the widow meditates second nuptials. Strangers are in possession of the old estate; there is nothing to divide amongst the children. Debts long since paid are brought again for settlement, and the survivors are called upon to acknowledge claims upon the departed. Debts owed are lost for want of evidence, with endless recriminations, abuse, and general confusion, all of which falls upon the three families [father's, mother's, and wife's families] of the deceased. They in their anger speak ill of him that is gone. He sees his children become corrupt, and his friends fall away. Some, perhaps, for the sake of bygone times, may stroke the coffin and let fall a tear, departing quickly with a cold smile. Worse than that, the wife sees her husband tortured in the *yamên*; the husband sees his wife victim to some horrible disease, lands gone, houses destroyed by flood or fire, and everything in unutterable confusion—the reward of former sins. All souls, after the misery of the terrace, will be thrust into the great Gehenna, and, when the amount of wickedness of each has been ascertained, they will be passed through the sixteen wards for the punishment of evil hearts.—*From the "Divine Panorama," published by the Mercy of Yü Ti. One of the sacred books of the Taoists. Translated by Herbert A. Giles in "Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio."*

#### L. HOMILETICAL HINTS.

##### 1 The duty of faithfully preaching the final judgment.

[16635] The second advent is a leading subject in Holy Scripture. It should also be prominent in the preaching of all Christ's ministers; else are they disobedient to Him, and unfaithful to their charge. Disobedient to Him; for it is His express command that they should "preach unto the people, and testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." Unfaithful to His Church; for what subject can there be more edifying, more invigorating, more consoling, than "that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ"?—*Bp. Waldegrave*.

[16636] Will it be urged that to excite the fears of men by dwelling on the wrath of God and on the terrors of perdition, is to con-

descend to appeal to their coarser passions, and to do dishonour to the spiritual dignity of the Christian faith? I am conscious of no "condescension" when I appeal to the same elements of human nature to which Christ appealed when He warned men of "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched;" and when He said that "the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them in a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." I am conscious of doing no dishonour to the spiritual dignity of the Christian faith when, with St. Paul, I give God thanks for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who delivers us from the wrath to come.—*Rev. R. W. Dale, D.D.*

## 2 Practical applications of the subject.

[16637] Let us steadily fix our anticipation upon that hereafter, which shall vividly occur to us, when "we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Take some suitable occasion, say—let it be in the dead of night, while all nature is hushed, and you may feel surrounded with what is the nearest semblance of the silence of that grave in which you must lie, and then listen as if you heard booming in the distance, from off an eternal shore, the harbinger, when "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." As this deep diapason fills the whole vault of heaven, have you a hope—feasible, though you may deem it slight—that the early summons will be to you? Or, are you still so unidentified with Christ, so indifferent and prayerless as regards His proffered mediation, that, were that moment to find you morally as you are now, you would inevitably have to wait—aware that, during your suspense, there was taking place the joyous assemblage of the faithful, and that, that once over, your fearful arraignment would ensue?—*Rev. J. Sortain.*

## HEAVEN.

### I. SCRIPTURAL PREDICTIONS OF A NEW CREATION.

[16638] Predictions of a new creation are, in a more or less direct form, an almost invariable feature of biblical eschatology. Such was the tone of prophecy before Christ's first advent, such that of the apostolic writings, and such that of our Lord's own words as recorded in the Gospels and the Apocalypse. This may be shortly indicated by the words of an ancient prophecy, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remem-

bered nor come into mind" (Isa. lxi. 17; cf. lxvi. 22); those of an apostolic epistle, "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. . . . Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (1 Pet. iii. 10, 13); and those of the great Christian prophecy, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. . . . And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. xxi. 1, 5).—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

### II. DIFFICULTIES IMPEDING BELIEF IN A UNIVERSAL RENOVATION.

The accompanying prediction of a preceding conflagration of the earth, and the still more formidable objection drawn from the moral aspect of such a destruction.

[16639] Looking on the changes which are wrought on the surface of the earth, or which have been wrought during the historic ages, we observe that the whole sum of them, after all the ordinary and all the convulsive operations of the physical forces which affect them, falls far short of anything approaching the magnitude of so stupendous a change as that which would be made by a destructive catastrophe such as is predicted. The terrific operation of fire on the body of the sun is now, however, well known to scientific observers, as well as the vast and most rapid changes which it effects. There is no difficulty in believing that such changes may be effected on the body of the earth, when we observe enormous craters to be almost instantly created on that of the sun—so enormous that many planets as large as the earth might be engulfed in them, and so intensely heated that the very granite would melt in the midst of them.—*Ibid.*

[16640] Such a world, with such a story, to be surrendered to annihilation! I cannot believe it. God has never said so. He has promised that it "shall be given to the saints." It will doubtless pass through a baptism of fire. It has already been the scene of huge conflagrations, fitting it up for human occupancy; and the pen of inspiration informs us how yet another fiery ordeal awaits it. But, just as the old world emerged from the flood purified, so shall this one emerge from the flames, renewed, reparedised, and fitted up for the habitation of righteousness—some say for a new order of beings, and others for the final residence of the saints. But, whatever its future destination, this is certain, that it shall be delivered from the dominion of evil, that a new genesis shall overtake it, and that it shall again be welcomed into the brotherhood of worlds with a shout louder and sweeter than that which saluted its first advent in the skies.—*T. McRae.*



### III. CONSIDERATIONS RESPECTING THE POWER AND AUTHORITY OF THE CREATOR AND HIS PROBABLE PURPOSE IN ORGANIZING A NEW CREATION.

[16641] God destroys only to create something more beautiful; and upon the ruins of the sentenced and purified world His hand raises up another which — not only for the cleansed vision of its new inhabitants, but in a reality as yet to us unknown—shall bloom in unfading splendour. If we mistake not, the last page of the Apocalypse, especially, opens up to us the prospect of a new order of things, in which the old boundary-line between heaven and earth is effaced, and this latter now inhabited by perfectly redeemed ones, itself has become part of heaven.—*J. Van Oosterzee.*

[16642] The "whole creation groaneth and travaileth together," fallen with fallen man; even in Christ's dispensation degenerating age by age, and removing further and further from the high standard of perfection in which it first came forth from the hands of the Creator. It is to make room for a perfect creature that this degenerated one is to pass away: to make room for one in which there will be no capacity for degeneration, no trace of imperfection, no stain of a will adverse to the will of God.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

### IV. SCIENTIFIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONJECTURES ON THE SUBJECT.

#### 1. Respecting the ultimate state of the present universe and its subsequent dissolution.

[16643] The universe in its present form is gradually wearing out. Suns, as sources of heat and motion, are parting with their energies. The time, therefore, will arrive when the earth will become too cold to be a fit habitation for animal life. It will then become a desolation, like the moon. Owing to loss of energy, it, and every one of the planetary bodies, will be ultimately absorbed into the sun. The sun too, notwithstanding the fresh supplies of heat which will be imparted to it by these catastrophes, will, in the lapse of ages, get cooler and cooler, gradually losing its energies, until it too is absorbed by some mightier body. This mightier body, too, is destined for a similar fate; and so likewise is the whole existing universe, until all its energies being equalized, it becomes one vast homogeneous mass, alike destitute of life and motion, destined to be the region of eternal silence and desolation, unless some power external to it exists, which is capable of starting it on a fresh series of developments, by again imparting to it motion and life.—*C. A. Row.*

#### 2. Respecting the nature of the new heaven and new earth.

*Viewed as a moral regeneration.*

[16644] The regeneration, commenced in the spirits of men, is to spread and extend to the

physical universe, to infuse a new force and life and spirit into it; so that in very deed all things shall become new, and the whole creation shall be redeemed from its subjection to vanity and corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Science standing wrapt in perplexity and astonishment before the mysteries of the origin of matter, of force, of life, of thought; and philosophy standing no less perplexed and astonished before the mysteries of pain, destruction, death, and the origin and function of evil, have this for their last word for us: that, in all probability, the visible universe is only a manifestation in time and space, "a manifold phenomenon" of the unseen universe; that within and behind all that we see there lies a spiritual universe in which are hidden the causes of this great natural scheme and order amid which we live; that by "the dissipation of energy" it is very certain that this physical universe must sooner or later come to an end, and that, when it does come to an end, the forces and energies which compose and sustain it will be found to have been reabsorbed by the unseen spiritual universe from which it sprang. That is to say, science and philosophy are at last tending to the conclusion which Christ announced eighteen centuries ago, viz., that the origin of the material universe is purely spiritual; that all which is merely or grossly material will one day pass away; and that then there will come "the regeneration," some more spiritual and perfect manifestation of the creative energy, in which there will be none of the defects and hindrances that inhere in all that is physical and temporal. In short, the invisible will shine through the visible, the eternal through the temporal, the real through the phenomenal.—*Rev. S. Cox, D.D.*

### V. THE FUTURE GLORY OF THE CHURCH IN THE TRIUMPHANT KINGDOM OF GOD.

As the final completion of the mighty work of the incarnation.

[16645] We are all familiar with the glorious things which are spoken of the "New Jerusalem." . . . But we are probably disposed to dwell on these glorious pictures of the holy city without a sufficient recognition of the fact that they represent a development and new creation of the religious life, and especially of that part of it which is associated with Divine worship. For this renovation of the religious life and of Divine worship is also the glorious climax of our Lord's incarnation, and therefore the coming down of the New Jerusalem from God is followed by "a great voice out of heaven" (Rev. xxi. 3); which recalls to our mind the fact that our Lord's incarnation was a tabernacling of the Deity in the humanity. That same presence of God, therefore, which has been at once the great power of the religious life, and the great object of Divine worship in the Church Militant, will be the same in the Church Triumphant.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

## VI. THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS (ACTS III. 21).

### Import of the phrase.

*The delivering up by Christ of the kingdom to the Father* (1 Cor. xv. 24).

[16646] "The *ἀποκατάστασις*," the restitution of all things (Acts iii. 21), which the Scripture expressly foretells, is described in Rev. xxi. This is the state Paul has in mind in 1 Cor. xv. 24–28. The Son has now advanced the kingdom of God to that point at which the love of the Father can be perfectly realized. He has given up the kingdom to the Father, laid aside His mediatorial office, for by the perfect destruction of sin and death, no more place is found for the mediatorial work of making atonement and redemption, because all the saved are matured for the glorious liberty of the children of God. But the meaning of the apostle by no means is that the mediatorial office of Christ is in every sense terminated. For Christ abides eternally the Bridegroom, the Head of the blessed kingdom; all communications of blessing from the Father to His creatures pass through the Son, and now it is for the first time, in the full sense of the words, true that Christ is present in all creation, for He now fills all with His own fulness.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[16647] Christ has been wielding His delegated sovereignty for men's salvation; and He has wielded it effectually. He needs to wield it no more. In their name, as well as in His own, He surrenders it. As representing them—Himself one with them, and having them one with Himself—being still their Head, and Lord, and redeeming King—He delivers up the kingly power which in that character He has been exercising over a province, once rebellious, but now subdued. Thus, in their name, and as their King, He resigns the universal "government" which, in their name and as their King, He has had "laid upon His shoulders." In resigning it, as well as in receiving it, He acts as the representative of His people. Continuing still to be their King, representing them and acting for them in that character and capacity, He abdicates His more extensive power and prerogative, as "head over all things to the Church." That universal power and prerogative He was entitled to claim, so long as the strife was hot. But now that the strife is over, He claims it no longer. Thus, and in these circumstances, "He delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father."—*Rev. R. Candlish, D.D.*

## VII. INCOMPLETENESS OF OUR KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING HEAVEN.

[16648] How little of the future and the unseen can be known by mere description; how faint and imperfect a view you can get of anything by a mere statement; how little you know of a landscape, a waterfall, a picture, by any description that can be given! Especially must this be so of objects which have no resemblance

to anything that we have seen. Who ever obtained any idea of Niagara by a description? Who, say to the most polished Greek and Roman mind, could have conveyed by mere description any idea of the printing-press, of a locomotive engine, of the magnetic telegraph? Who could convey to one born blind an idea of the prismatic colours; or to the deaf an idea of sounds? And when you think how meagre in the Bible is the description of heaven, when you think how easy it would have been to furnish a more minute description, are you certain that human language could have communicated to you the great and bright conception; or that, if words could have been found, they would have conveyed to you an exact idea of a state so different from what is our condition here?—*Barnes.*

[16649] All our meditations on, and descriptions of, heaven want balance, and are, so to speak, pictures ill composed. We first build up our glorified human nature by such hints as are furnished us in Scripture; we place it in an abode worthy of it; and then after all we give it an unending existence with nothing to do. It was not ill said by a great preacher, that most people's idea of heaven was that it is to sit on a cloud and sing psalms. And others again strive to fill this out with the bliss of recognizing and holding intercourse with those from whom we have been severed on earth. And beyond all doubt such recognition and intercourse shall be, and shall constitute, one of the most blessed accessories of the heavenly employment; but it can no more be that employment itself than similar intercourse on earth was the employment of life itself here. To read some descriptions of heaven, one would imagine that it were only an endless prolongation of some social meeting; walking and talking in some blessed country with those whom we love. It is clear that we have not thus provided the renewed energies and enlarged powers of perfected man with food for eternity. Nor if we look in another direction, that of the absence of sickness and care and sorrow, shall we find any more satisfactory answer to our question. Nay, rather shall we find it made more difficult and beset with more complication. For let us think how much of employment for our present energies is occasioned by, and finds its very field of action in, the anxieties and vicissitudes of life. They are, so to speak, the winds which fill the sail and carry us onward. By their action, hope and enthusiasm are excited. But suppose a state where they are not, and life would become a dead calm; the sail would flap idly, and the spirit would cease to look onward at all. So that unless we can supply something over and above the mere absence of anxiety and pain, we have not attained to, nay, we are farther than ever from, a sufficient employment for the life eternal. Now, before we seek for it in another direction, let us think for a moment in this way. Are we likely to know much of it? What does the child at its play know of the em-

poyments of the man? Such portions of them as are merely external and material he may take in, and represent in his sport; but the work and anxiety of the student at his book, or the man of business at his desk, these are of necessity entirely hidden from the child. And so it is onward through the advancing stages of life. Of each of them it may be said, "We know not with what we must serve the Lord, until we come thither." So that we need not be utterly disappointed if our picture of heaven be at present ill composed, if it seem to be little else than a gorgeous mist after all. We cannot fill in the members of the landscape at present. If we could, we should be in heaven.—*Dean Alford*.

### VIII. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS OF HEAVEN.

#### 1 They are chiefly negative.

[16650] It has often been noticed as one of the great contrasts between the religion of the Bible and all the religions which men have invented, that they are full of minute, trivial, unworthy, and manifestly false accounts of the heavenly state, while nothing of the sort can be alleged of the representations in Scripture upon the subject. One characteristic of its descriptions may be noticed by any careful reader. They are very much *negative*. For instance, "the children of this world" or age "marry and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more" (Luke xx. 34-36). "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death," &c. (Rev. xxi. 4, 27, xxii. 3, 5). These descriptions, like many of the descriptions of God Himself, rather suggest than directly assert; that is, they mention limitations and defects which are familiar to us at present, and assert that these shall have no existence in heaven.—*Rev. G. Douglas*.

#### 2 They are largely figurative.

(1) *The heaven of St. John's last vision is pictured for us by imagery mainly borrowed from the description of the garden of Eden.*

[16651] The river of pure water, the tree of life, the gold and precious stones of the first Paradise all reappear in the second. The "blessed" ones who have kept God's commandments are described as having regained the right to eat of that fruit of immortality which man lost by breaking God's first command. They enter in through gates which, no longer barred by the sword of the cherubim, stand always open. The "sorrow and the crying," the "pain and the death" that had their beginning in the hour when God drove out the first sinner from His presence, are described as passing away in the hour when God welcomes back to His presence the nations of the saved. . . . The record of our race ends where it began—in a paradise of God.—*Bp. Magee*.

[16652] It is necessary to consider, if we wish to understand what Christian people of our own age really think about heaven, that all expressions about it must (for purposes of practical thought) be considered as symbolical or conjectural, and not literal or absolute. The Apocalypse is the Vision of St. John written in a book; a record of things seen in the spirit and not with eyes, not as man seeth. The vision is true, but not literal; the things are real, but not actual like earthly things. They are simply things unspeakable by the outer ("proforic") word of expression; and they are indefinable by the inner ("endiathetic") word of thought. They are postulated as free from the conditions of time and space which limit human conception. All of us to a certain extent, proportioned to our incapacity, must accept the symbolic for the actual.—*Church Quarterly Review*.

(2) *Although there may probably be much material beauty in heaven, it is the moral atmosphere of purity and holiness which constitutes its chief loveliness.*

[16653] It is not mere external loveliness that will make the heaven of our rest and our hope. Beautiful as heaven may be and must be, it would be a poor and empty thing to make the soul's eternal rest, if you had said your best of it when you had told us of its outward beauty. It is not walls of gems and gates of pearl that will make the soul happy! It must be something that eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard that shall do that! It is the righteous and holy heart, in the Saviour's presence. It is, that in the golden city sin is done with for ever; and the soul made perfect in holiness, blest with a spiritual bliss that will make it feel it never knew happiness before. And *that* is what makes heaven. All the glories and beauties of the Revelation are mere slight incidental trifles when compared with that! There may be pearly streams and silver sand—we do not know: there may be diamond dew's glittering on fadeless flowers: there may be golden pavements and glassy seas: there may be palms of triumph, and thrones of gold, and palaces not built with hands, that tower into that sky of cloudless blue: it may be that every description the Bible gives us of the materialism of heaven shall be fulfilled to the letter: but oh, the grand thing will be the moral atmosphere of purity and holiness, pervaded by the Redeemer's presence: the grand thing will be that all evil—everything that defileth—shall be done with for evermore.—*A. K. H. B.*

### IX. THE HEAVEN OF POPULAR LANGUAGE.

[16654] In popular language this word is used, in general, for all the infinite space which lies beyond the accessible world; and in particular for the visible portion of it, the "firmament" or "sky" in which the fixed stars and planets are situated. It is often used in a similar way in the Holy Scriptures, more especially in the Old Testament, where the region of clouds and the region of the stars are each so designated, as well as



the abode of God and His glorified servants (e.g., Dan. iv. 12, vii. 2, 13, the "fowls," "winds," and "clouds;" Gen. xxii. 17, the "stars;" Isa. lxvi. 1, the "throne" of heaven). There seems to have been, indeed, a habit among Jewish writers of distinguishing these several regions as the first, second, and third heavens; and the language of St. Paul when he speaks of "one caught up to the third heaven" (2 Cor. xii. 2) is probably an illustration of this habit. Latin theologians have adopted the same classification, distinguishing the three as "Cœlum Aqueum," "Cœlum Sidereum," and "Cœlum Empyreum." Another classification is also observable in Holy Scripture, that of two regions, "the heaven and the heaven of heavens" (Deut. x. 14; 1 Kings viii. 27; Psa. cxv. 16). A third was adopted by Rabbinical writers, that of seven in which the abode of God is the "seventh heaven," while four intermediate ones, the abode of different orders of spiritual beings, are interposed between the Cœlum Empyreum and the Cœlum Sidereum. This classification is recognized by several of the Fathers and by many imaginative writers of later date, and it has also been adopted by the Mohammedans, but it has no ground in Holy Scripture, nor is it known that it is built on any more ancient tradition than that of later Judaism in the Cabala.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

## X. THE HEAVEN OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

### I A place as well as a state of being.

[16655] Each man has a separate and individual, though, perhaps, an indistinct idea of his own of what heaven may be. To some it is merely a *state*. It is all within. We may carry it about with us wherever we go, in the perfect rest of a conscience washed in blood, a soul fully conscious of its acquittal from condemnation, the joy of spiritual fellowship with Christ and the Father, the love which ever gushes forth in the sublime language of praise, as we sing, "Whom having not seen we love; in whom though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." To others it is all associated with a *place*. There must be trees, rivers, golden pavements, jasper walls, harps of gold, bejewelled crowns, companies of angelic beings, all the insignia of a royal life, a grand tableau in which they shall share, majestic spectacles in which they shall bear their part. Probably a combination of both ideas will furnish us with the most appropriate representation of those heavenly delights which we hope soon to share. Take two men of kindred purity of spirit. Let one dwell amid the gloom of dark ravines, where the chill atmosphere is never warmed by the genial rays of the sun, where overhanging rocks make perpetual gloom, where no music save that of the hoarse cataract is ever heard, where the song-birds never come, the dewdrops never glint, flowers never shed perfume on the breeze, and the only vegetation is

the loathsome fungi that finds its congenial home amid the darkness. Let another dwell in a sweet sylvan nook, a quiet cottage in the bosom of the laughing valley, whence he can see the heather bells, and smell the brier rose, or go forth and sit at the lake-side amid the shade of birch and pine and aspen, while the rich breezes from the mountains on either side pour torrents of life through his veins. Can you doubt which will be the happier of the two? Surely he who possesses the purity within, and enjoys the heaven without. The state and the place combine together to make the happiness so far complete.—*G. Evans.*

[16656] Nothing could be more foolish than the indiscriminate objections that are taken to the idea of heaven as a place. To all finite existences there must be place. The simple being in a place will not, as we know, make up our idea of heaven. There must be a glory within that answers to the glory without; nevertheless that outer glory is not the less real on that account. Hence, while there is to be a "name," there is also to be a "local habitation." There is to be a "holy city," a "new Jerusalem."—*R. Mitchell.*

### 2 The city of God, and temple of His visible Presence.

(1) "*A city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*" (Heb. xi. 10).

[16657] A city never built with hands, nor hoary with the years of time—a city whose inhabitants no census has numbered—a city through whose streets rush no tides of business, nor nodding hearse creeps slowly with its burden to the tomb—a city without griefs or graves, without sins or sorrows, without births or burials, without marriages or mournings—a city which glories in having Jesus for its King, angels for its guards, saints for its citizens; whose walls are salvation, and whose gates are praise.—*Rev. T. Guthrie, D.D.*

[16658] It is the everlasting seat of consummate holiness or virtue, where that Divine principle shines without alloy, flourishes in immortal youth, and reigns and triumphs with eternal glory. It is the place in which are seen all the finishings of Divine workmanship, and in which the beauty and greatness of the Infinite Mind, and the endless diversities of omniscient skill appear in all their most exquisite forms, and in the last degrees of refinement and perfection. It is the centre of all Divine communications—the city in which all the paths of Providence terminate—the ocean from which all the streams of Infinite Wisdom and goodness proceed, and into which they return, to flow again and for ever.—*President Dwight.*

[16659] Think what Babylon was, what Athens, what Rome, and above all what Jerusalem was, in ancient time, to their respective citizens; think also what Milan, Venice, Florence, Genoa were to their inhabitants in the

Middle Ages ; and you will easily perceive how naturally heaven would shape itself as a city of transcendent beauty to the inhabitants of any of those great and superb cities, whether in the ancient or the modern world. You will also see how natural it would be for St. John to conceive of heaven as a glorified Ephesus, or, more exactly still, as "a new Jerusalem," the city of the Great King. To him it would involve no great and sudden break in the continuity of human life that a man should pass from the city of Ephesus or Jerusalem to the still more superb city which he had seen in his visions—a city in which the marble palaces of earth, and the cunningly wrought gates of bronze, and the fountains and aqueducts, were replaced by mansions built of gems, and gates of pearl, and streets paved with gold, and a pure river of living waters.—*S. Cox, D.D.*

(2) "*I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it*" (Rev. xxi. 22).

[16660] There is to be no need hereafter of those ordinances, those ministrations, those sacraments, through which, as channels, God is here pleased to communicate grace : the saints shall be privileged with direct and open intercourse ; they shall be environed with manifestations of Deity ; these shall be their sanctuary ; and having thus access to God and the Lamb, they will no longer require the rites and institutions of an earthly dispensation. We suppose this to be what is indicated by the fact that God will be the temple of the heavenly city, though the fact itself far exceeds our comprehension. A temple builded of Godhead, its walls His attributes, its roof His majesty, its gates His eternity ! And to worship in this temple, to live in this temple, to worship God in God ! there is a wonderfulness here which is not to be overtaken by all our strivings ; for who can imagine to himself the everlasting Creator condescending to become as a sanctuary to the children of men, the gorgeous cathedral into whose recesses they may penetrate, and at whose altars they may do homage ? We can feel, O God, that the universe is Thy temple ; we are overwhelmed by the thought that Thou Thyself wilt be the temple of the universe !—*Rev. H. Melvill, B.D.*

### 3 The abode of angels and saints.

[16661] St. John describes the society in that world as composed of "angels" and "saints"—those who have never sinned, and those who were redeemed, and "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The former were created and have continued in the highest rank of bright and glorious spirits. The latter were once "dead in trespasses and sins ;" "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience ;" but they have been quickened together with Christ, and raised up together with Him, and made to sit with angels and the Lord of angels, "in

heavenly places." Angels scorn not their society ; they welcome them as partakers of their joy, and delight in their happiness. The interest which they take in man they have already manifested. When man was created, "these morning stars sang together ; these sons of God shouted for joy." When he was redeemed, their bright hosts flew to earth, and sang, "Glory to God in the highest." When a sinner repents, there is joy in the presence of the angels ; and in the midst of all the sorrows and trials and temptations here below, they are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. They conveyed the departed Lazarus to Abraham's bosom. With what warmth of affection will these holy beings welcome us to their blissful society above ! With what transport will they lead us up to the throne of God and the Lamb, and point us to the surrounding glories of our eternal abode ; with what joy will they relate, and we hear, the account of their embassies of love to us, while we were here training for heaven ! And while we celebrate the grace that brought us through, and dwell on the wonders of redeeming love, though they sing not our song, yet with a voice as the sound of many waters and the voice of mighty thunders, they will strike the chorus to our praises.—*Rev. W. Taylor, D.D.*

### 4 The true home of the soul.

[16662] Home ! oh how sweet is that word ! What beautiful and tender associations cluster thick around it ! Compared with it, house, mansion, palace are cold, heartless terms. But "home !"—that word quickens the pulse, warms the heart, stirs the soul to its depths, makes age feel young again, rouses apathy into energy, sustains the sailor in his midnight watch, inspires the soldier with courage on the field of battle, and imparts patient endurance to the worn-down sons of toil. The thought of it has proved a sevenfold shield to virtue : the very name of it has been a spell to call back the wanderer from the paths of vice. And far away, where myrtles bloom and palm-trees wave, and the ocean sleeps upon coral strands, to the exile's fond fancy it clothes the naked rock, or stormy shore, or barren moor, or wild highland mountain, with charms he weeps to think of, and longs once more to see. Grace sanctifies these lovely affections, and imparts a sacredness to the homes of earth by making them types of heaven. As a home the believer delights to think of it. Thus, when lately bending over a dying saint, and expressing our sorrow to see him lie so low, with the radiant countenance rather of one who has just left heaven than of one about to enter it, he raised and clasped his hands, and exclaimed in ecstasy, "I am going home."—*Rev. T. Guthrie, D.D.*

[16663] The sweetest type of heaven is home—nay, heaven is the home for whose acquisition we are to strive the most strongly. Home, in one form and another, is the great object of life. It stands at the end of every day's labour, and

beckons us to its bosom : and life would be cheerless and meaningless, did we not discern across the river that divides us from the life beyond, glimpses of the pleasant mansions prepared for us.—*J. Holland.*

[16664] We sigh and wander, we vibrate to and fro, till we rest in that special centre where our deepest loves are garnered up. Then the heart fills and brims over with its own happiness, and spreads sweetness and fertility all around it. Very often when the eyes are closing in death, and this world is shutting off the light from the departing soul, the last wish which is made audible is "to go home." The words break out sometimes through the cloud of delirium ; but it is the soul's deepest and most central want, groping after its object, haply soon to find it as the clogs of earth clear away, and she springs up on the line of swift affection, as the bee with unerring precision swoots through the dusk of evening to her cell.—*Rev. E. Sears, D.D.*

[16665] Heaven will be a home, a vast brotherly community, where the richest resources of social delight and improvement shall satisfy those social affections that are now one of the deepest elements of our nature, and which the grace of God strengthens and purifies in all who are born of the Spirit. How unutterably blessed the high society that from this world has been assembling in the seats of disembodied saints ! There was a time when the first spirit from earth entered the abode of angels. Abel's song was a human solo beside the throne. How many, and of what varied excellence, are the multitude that have since then joined the fellowship of the blessed ! The venerable throng of the patriarchs, the goodly fellowship of prophets and apostles, the noble army of martyrs, and the ever-increasing hosts of the pure and good, the firm in righteousness and the gentle in love, the deep-thoughted sage and the blooming infant spirit, all, from many lands, have been joining the great multitude of the society of the saved. How rich, how varied, how fresh, and glad, and sweet must be the commingling of thought and love in such society ; and how exalted their devotions !—*J. Graham.*

##### 5 The "rest that remaineth."

[16666] *Rest remaineth*—oh, how sweet !  
Flowery fields for wandering feet,  
Peaceful calm for sleepless eyes,  
Life for death, and songs for sighs.

*Rest remaineth*—hush that sigh,  
Mourning pilgrim, rest is nigh ;  
Yet a season, bright and blest,  
Thou shalt enter on thy rest.

*Rest remaineth*—rest from sin,  
Guilt can never enter in ;  
Every warring thought shall cease,  
Rest is purity and peace.

*Rest remaineth*—rest from tears,  
Rest from parting, rest from fears ;  
Every trembling thought shall be  
Lost, my Saviour, lost in Thee.

—*Paxton Hood.*

[16667] What tranquillity will there be in heaven ! Who can express the fulness and blessedness of this peace ! What a calm is this ! How sweet and holy and joyous ! What a haven of rest to enter, after having passed through the storms and tempests of this world, in which pride and selfishness, and envy and malice, and scorn and contempt, and contention and vice are as waves of a restless ocean, always rolling, and often dashed about in violence and fury ! What a Canaan of rest to come to, after going through this waste and howling wilderness, full of snares and pitfalls and poisonous serpents, where no rest could be found !—*Jonathan Edwards.*

[16668] Well may this happiness be described under the notion of rest, since those desires, which were never at rest before, will then be so ; and the human heart, so given to wander from object to object, shall find its proper centre, and there fix for ever, not feeling any opposite attraction.—*H. Grove.*

[16669] O rest ! thou soft word ! autumnal flower of Eden ! Moonlight of the spirit ! Rest of the soul, when wilt thou hold our head that it may be still, and our heart that it may cease beating ? Ah ! ere the one grows pale and the other stiff, thou comest often and goest often, and only down below with sleep and with death thou abidest ; whereas above, men with the greatest wings, like birds of paradise, are whirled about most of all by the storms.—*Richter.*

##### XI. VARIETIES OF CHARACTER IN HEAVEN.

[16670] God has given to each his talent and his temperament, and in the Church below He has made this diversity of gifts not a discord but a symphony—a source not of confusion and disorder, but of beauty and stable symmetry. And so, doubtless, will it continue on high. The lily, when you rescue it from among the thorns, or when from the windy storm and the tempest you take it into the sunny shelter, does not become a palm or a cedar, but only a fairer, sweeter lily than before. And a topaz or a sapphire of earth, if taken to build the walls of the New Jerusalem, does not become an emerald or an amethyst, but remains a topaz or a sapphire still. And translated from the tarnish and attrition of time, it is easy to understand how each glorified nature will retain in a higher sphere its original fitness and inherent affinities ; and how for the many mansions there will not only be many occupants, but every occupant may have his own office even there. It is easy to imagine that Isaac still will meditate, and that the sweet singer of Israel shall neither be



at a loss for a golden harp nor good matter in a song. It is easy to imagine that Paul will find some outlet for his eloquence, and Peter for his energy; and not easy to conceive that John the Divine will be the same as Philip or Matthew, or Martha the busy housekeeper the same as Mary the adoring listener. To every precious stone there remains its several tint; to every star its own glory; to every denizen of the Church above his own office; and to every member of the heavenly family his own mansion.—*Hamilton.*

[16671] The blessed God delights in variety. In all His works, along with perfect order, there is eternal change. There is no mountain exactly like another mountain; there are no two trees whose boughs bend into the same network of interlacing lines; no two leaves alike; no two clouds alike; no two waves alike; but the face of nature is infinitely diversified. So also is the Church. You see no two men with the like endowments; no two spheres marked by exact similarity. Each one has his own peculiar gift for his own peculiar station; some have to serve their Lord with the power of the pen, others with the power of the tongue; some by their poverty, others by their wealth; and each one has a distinct individuality of power and place and opportunity. We see Aaron with his eloquence, and Moses with his stammering speech. "There is a Jeremy to give the prophecy, and a Baruch to read it," a Paul to plant, and an Apollos to water. One man is a "son of consolation," another a "son of thunder." One servant has five talents, another two, and another one. As the Church in heaven is but the consummation of the Church on earth, we may infer that the law of variety, which shines in this earthly exhibition of Christianity, and which prevails all over this region of existence, sheds its fascinations over Paradise, and lends its zest to the services of heaven.—*Stanford.*

[16672] Amongst the good whom we hope to meet in heaven, there will be every variety of character, taste, and disposition. There is not one "mansion" there; but many. There is not one "gate" to heaven; but many. There are not gates only on the north; but on the east three gates, and on the west three gates, and on the south three gates. From opposite quarters of the theological compass, from opposite quarters of the religious world, from opposite quarters of human life and character, through different expressions of their common faith and hope, through different modes of conversion, through different portions of the Holy Scripture, will the weary travellers enter the heavenly city, and meet each other—"not without surprise"—on the shores of the same river of life. And on those shores they will find a tree bearing, not the same kind of fruit always and at all times, but "twelve manner of fruits," for every different turn of mind—for the patient sufferer, for the active servant, for the holy and humble philo-

sopher, for the spirits of just men now at last made perfect; and "the leaves of the tree shall be for the healing," not of one single Church or people only, not for the Scotsman or Englishman only, but for the "healing of the nations"—the Frenchman, the German, the Italian, the Russian—for all those from whom it may be, in this, its fruits have been farthest removed, but who, nevertheless, have "hungered and thirsted after righteousness," and who there:ore "shall be filled."—*Dean Stanley.*

## HELL.

### I. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION ABOUT THE TRUE NOTION OF PUNISHMENT.

[16673] The only conception of punishment which satisfies our strongest and most definite moral convictions, and which corresponds to the place it occupies both in the organization of society and in the moral order of the universe, is that which represents it as pain and loss inflicted for the violation of a law. If the law is a righteous law, if the severity of the penalty is not out of proportion to the magnitude of the offence, the punishment is just; the offender has deserved whatever he suffers. Suffering inflicted upon a man to make him better in the future is not punishment, but discipline; to be punishment, it must be inflicted for evil deeds done in the past. Suffering endured for the sake of benefiting society is not punishment: if accepted voluntarily, it is the heroism of self-sacrifice; if inflicted by arbitrary authority, it is injustice on the one side and martyrdom on the other. What a man suffers from the resentment of another is not punishment, but mere persecution and annoyance, unless the suffering is the effect of moral indignation provoked by real or imaginary wrongs committed against the person by whom the suffering is inflicted: according as the wrongs are imaginary or real, the punishment is unjust or just. That the suffering inflicted is deserved is a necessary element in the conception of punishment.—*Rev. R. Dale, D.D.*

### II. SIGNIFICANCE OF ETERNAL DAMNATION.

[16674] Spiritual destruction or devastation begins in time. Not only do the causes of this destruction rage around the soul which may ultimately be destroyed by them—the destruction itself has as veritable an existence as spiritual death has in the probationary state. Indeed, the destruction and the death are identical. If the term death may legitimately be employed to designate a miserable state of the living human soul, there cannot be any valid objection against the use of the term destruction to express the present miserable condition of the lost soul. It is not, then, simply in view of the future that souls are

called *lost, dead, destroyed*. Even though the future were an eternal blank, loss and death and destruction are inflicted now. The human soul is not destroyed as was the temple of Jerusalem, when one stone was not left upon another. It is destroyed as was that temple when its altars were cast down and shivered, when its Holy of Holies was desecrated, when its hallowed enclosures were all filled and profaned by the heathen soldiery of Rome.—*Rev. W. Bathgate, D.D.*

[16675] This state is, in point of fact, the prolongation of a spiritual death which has actually begun in time, a prolongation of it into eternity, just as the life of the blessed ones in heaven is a prolongation of an eternal life begun here amid the scenes of time onward, into the world beyond the grave, into their eternity. We here become what we shall be for ever, only that which in this life may be almost infinitely modified becomes beyond the grave fixed, irrevocable.—*Canon Liddon.*

### III. IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

[16676] No thinking man can fail to see that the doctrine of future punishment viewed in its essential elements, and apart from any particular rendering, has a momentous bearing on Christian life and upon our whole theological system.—*Church Quarterly Review.*

[16677] Every one who has reflected maturely upon the workings of the human mind, perceives that, whether the fact be confessed or concealed, the stress of the controversy concerning the Divine mission of Christ pends upon the doctrine of future punishment. The affirmations of our Lord and His apostles on this subject, though they fall in with the smothered forebodings of conscience in every man's bosom, give a distinct form to apprehensions from which the mind strives, by all means, if possible, to escape, and which it will never cordially admit, until the moral faculties be rectified. *The quarrel of the world with Christianity comes to its issue upon this doctrine of future retribution.*—*Isaac Taylor.*

### IV. THE UNPOPULARITY OF PREACHING CONCERNING THE LOST.

[16678] Strange, indeed, were such a doctrine or its preaching popular! Who that knows aught of our customary weaknesses can anticipate but that prepossessions, not to be overcome except by the most resolute perseverance of the watchmen of Christ, shall arise against a truth, which, were it conceived in its full proportions (a task, perhaps, impossible to man!) would involve the whole face of nature in gloom, would hang the very heavens in black, and make all their daily and nightly glories but the torch-lights of a funeral chamber; a truth which loads every instant of life with a weight almost in-

tolerable of responsibility, which, contracting life to a short winter-day, stretches out beyond it the drear, the starless dark of a midnight on which no morrow shall ever dawn.—*Rev. Archer Butler.*

### V. THE ESSENTIAL JUSTICE OF THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED.

[16679] The true ground of the equity of this most awful dispensation of punishment is to be found in the infinite criminality of sin—of the voluntary contradiction by any subordinate will of the supreme all-righteous will of the universe; which we may well conceive to involve in it something incomparably more fearful than our miserable familiarity with the fact ever allows us practically to realize. It may also be considered that the punishment in this case is not merely in proportion to sin, but in proportion to the parallel eternity of glory offered. It is the punishment of beings to whom eternal life has been tendered, and by whom it has been rejected, of beings who have had an option, and have taken their choice. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."—*Ibid.*

[16680] When I read in the Bible of the undying worm, and the outer darkness, and the quenchless flame, I ask who spoke those words. Were they uttered on Sinai that their echoes might roll in thunder upon the desert winds? Did Hebrew prophets threaten them in the torrent of their scathing denunciation and unutterable scorn? Nay, it is a fact which I dare not ignore, that He spoke them who died for us; He who told us of His Father's care for the falling sparrow and the raven's callow brood; He who willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Oh, voice of most just judgment, more terrible because it fell from the lips of eternal love. Where then is there room for confidence? Do we believe Christ? Are we more just than our Redeemer? Do we love human souls more tenderly than He loved them? It is indeed an agony to think that for some human souls, aye, for some who have rejoiced under the blue sky and played in the green fields—for some who were once children in the sanctity of their lovely innocence, and who once lifted their little white hands as they lisped to their heavenly Father an infant's prayer—it should have been better that they had never been born. Yet Christ said it.—*Archdeacon Farrar.*

### VI. THE RELATION OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT TO OTHER BIBLICAL TRUTHS.

[16681] Never will any one, in truth, believe the redemption by Christ who does not believe in hell. God became man, to redeem—from what? From what, according to them, is equally remedied without it. He died—to purchase what? What, after a time, is to be be-

stowed alike on Judas and the beloved disciple, on Nero and St. Peter, on Messalina and the blessed Virgin, on Satan or Michael the archangel. Never will you know anything of the depth of sin, or the deeper depth of the love of Christ or of God, until you not only believe in the abstract, but accustom yourselves to think of that awful doom, to which each wilful rejection of God's voice in your conscience, and of God in that voice, was dragging you. Fear not to look at it; for, narrow though the bridge be which spans its lurid flames, that bridge is sure to those whom it upholds; for it is the cross of Christ, and Christ Himself will stretch forth His hand to lead thee safely over it.—*Rev. E. Pusey, D.D.*

[16682] This dogma is no mere excrescence and outwork in the system of Catholic truth; it is, on the contrary, so rigorously bound up with the entire framework of this Divine system, and so thoroughly fundamental, that to hesitate in the slightest degree at its admission is to hesitate respecting the admission of all other truths, and to reject it is to reject all.—*Nicolas.*

#### VII. DANGERS ARISING FROM THE DENIAL OF EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

- 1 The practical tendency to minimize the sense of the evil of sin by minimizing the conception of its ill desert and punishment.

[16683] We fear that the attempt to broaden the Church by dropping out this article, which energizes the entire truth as it is in Jesus, will be to increase its extension at the cost of its intensive life and force, if it do not cause new divisions and sects. This enervating tendency is not disproved by some notable cases of doubters or rejecters of this doctrine eminent for purity of life, pulpit power, and pastoral fidelity. The bodies of people who have long rejected it are known by their fruits. As a whole, less wrought upon by the terrors, they are less constrained by the love of God in Christ. Each of these illustrates the other. In both are found the blended elements of Infinite Excellence. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. ii. 22).—*Dr. L. Alwater.*

[16684] Considering the moral necessity of punishment, we cannot but regard it as one of the most prominent symptoms of a fatal disease, which is eating into the very heart of our national life; that our people, so far at least as they are represented by the prevailing views of our educated classes, no longer believe in punishment as properly the desert of sin. . . . No one is surer of applause than the man who discovers some new method of evading justice under the pretext of humanity.—*J. Müller.*

- 2 The virtual annihilation of heaven.

[16685] It has been urged that, as virtue is its

own reward, and vice its own punishment, the criminal is sufficiently punished while on earth, and need not, therefore, have hell superadded. The argument, if valid in relation to hell, is equally valid in relation to heaven; hence, as virtue is its own reward, the virtuous man is sufficiently rewarded on earth, and needs not a superadded heaven. By parity of reasoning, this latter position is impregnable. The logic which closes hell annihilates heaven.—*Rev. J. Parker, D.D.*

#### 3 The erroneous conception of Deity.

[16686] I understand not the most dangerous, because most attractive form of modern infidelity, which, pretending to exalt the beneficence of the Deity, degrades it into a reckless infinitude of mercy and blind obliteration of the work of sin, and which does this chiefly by dwelling on the manifold appearances of God's kindness on the face of creation. Such kindness is indeed everywhere and always visible, but not alone. Wrath and threatening are invariably mingled with the love; and in the utmost solitudes of nature the existence of hell seems to me as legibly declared, by a thousand spiritual utterances, as that of heaven. It is well for us to dwell with thanksgiving on the unfolding of the flower, and the falling of the dew, and the sleep of the green fields in the sunshine; but the blasted trunk, the barren rock, the moaning of the bleak winds, the roar of the black, perilous, merciless whirlpools of the mountain-streams, the solemn solitudes of moors and seas, the continual fading of all beauty into darkness, and of all strength into dust—have these no language for us? We may seek to escape their teaching by reasonings touching the good which is wrought out of all evil; but it is vain sophistry! The good succeeds to the evil as day succeeds to night, but so also the evil to the good. Gerizim and Ebal, birth and death, light and darkness, heaven and hell, divide the existence of man and his futurity. . . . The love of God is, however, always shown by the predominance or greater sum of good in the end, but never by the annihilation of evil. The modern doubts of eternal punishment are not so much the consequence of benevolence as of feeble powers of reasoning. Every one admits that God brings finite good out of finite evil. Why not, therefore, infinite good out of infinite evil?—*Kuskin.*

#### VIII. NATURE OF THE PUNISHMENT OF HELL.

[16687] With regard to the *nature* of the sufferings, nothing is matter of faith. No one doubts that the very special suffering will be the loss of God (*pana damni*): that, being what they are, they know that they were made by God for Himself, and yet, through their own obstinate will, will not have Him. As to "pains of sense," the Church has nowhere laid down as a matter of faith the material character of the worm and the fire, or that they denote more



than the gnawing of remorse. Although, then, it would be very rash to lay down dogmatically that the "fire" is *not* to be understood literally, as it has been understood almost universally by Christians, yet no one has a right to urge these representations, from which the imagination so shrinks, as a ground for refusing to believe in hell, since he is left free not to believe them.—*Rev. E. Pusey, D.D.*

[16688] Our Lord in Matthew xxv. 46 uses no figure of speech, but gives a literal statement of the future condition of the ungodly. It will be a state of punishment; that is the radical idea; and all the figurative terms, fire, chains, darkness, death, destruction, and the like, come under this generic idea to give intensity to some peculiar phase of that punishment which underlies the whole.—*Rev. J. Thompson.*

[16689] The children of the wicked one are depicted in terms which imply an absence of events in their history: no variety, no progress, no gleams of sunshine crossing their darkened path; no energy, no activity, no knowledge, nothing worth calling life; clouds without water, stamped with the mark of God's indignation for ever and ever.—*Rev. R. Girdlestone.*

#### IX. THE UTTER MISERY AND ANGUISH OF HELL.

[16690] The condemned spirit is doomed at the moment of sentence to a perpetual continuance in iniquity; and we cannot but believe that it requires a very slight knowledge of the human heart to see that there is here involved a condition of intense mental anguish. Take the example of a man of extraordinary depravity; in the midst of his most flagrant violations of the Divine law, he cherishes the hope of reformation at some future period; he allows himself, indeed, little space for reflection, but whenever his reflections do take a moral direction, he pleases and soothes, ay, and strengthens himself in guilt by the idea of repentance and amendment hereafter. He does not expect always to be so bad. Because he is wicked now, he does not feel that he shall always be wicked. Contrariwise, he has heard of a variety of cases of the penitence and godly end of sinners as great as himself, and thence he argues to the probability of his own rejection of vice at some indefinite period. Now what is all this but the impatience even of the most abandoned soul under sin? what but proof that the heart cannot be at ease, that the spirit of a man cannot be satisfied with iniquity. The guilt of the unrighteous is theirs for ever; they are sent forth to spend the long eternity, irremediably polluted. Mingled with Satan and his angels, they may learn from the more tremendous development of sin in angelic creatures, to hate sin, but they cannot shake it off. Taught by bitter experience how it blasts all happiness, and withers all delight, they may, perhaps,

come to abhor that to which they once gave way.

[16691] The lost soul will raise himself out of the fire only to fall back into it. He will always feel the desire of rising, because he was created for God, as a bird shut up in a room flies to the ceiling and falls down again; the justice of God is the ceiling which keeps down the lost.—*Vianney.*

[16692] Scripture is more terrible in its mysterious reserve about the "wrath to come" than any picture man could paint; there is more pathetic and awful meaning in the one word "the lost" than in any attempt of ours to expand the thought.—*Dean Church.*

#### X. RELATIVE PROPORTION OF THE SAVED AND THE DAMNED.

[16693] I always think of the number of the finally lost out of all ages and worlds as bearing no greater proportion to all the inhabitants of the intelligent universe than the number in the prisons and penitentiaries in well-ordered societies now bears to the whole population.—*J. Cook.*

[16694] The number of the lost will bear no more proportion to that of the saved, when the final judgment shall for ever settle the destinies of our race, than the convicts in a prison bear to the inhabitants of the state.—*Rev. R. Lardis, D.D.*

[16695] If, in addition to a third part of the human race, who die in their childhood, the many who pass into happiness unnoticed from obscure situations in life, and the multitudes of pious people whom bigotry anathematizes as damnable heretics, we add all those who are pretty generally acknowledged to be the people of God, with all idiots, and the chief part of those who die between the age of seven and twelve (and who can doubt but most of these are received to happiness after death?), it will require no very great stretch of faith and charity to conclude, that hitherto a majority of the human race have attained to felicity in the eternal world. And if we look forward the prospect will brighten; for there is an age approaching, during which righteousness will be universal. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9).—*D. Isaac.*

#### XI. THE DEGREES OF SUFFERING IN HELL.

[16696] The Scriptures teach, in the most unequivocal terms, that there will be degrees in the final punishment of the wicked, not less than in the final rewards of the righteous. The general principle laid down by our Lord: "That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he

that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." He himself applies to the awards of the final judgment: "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." Now the common doctrine of eternal punishment admits, as we have seen, of degrees innumerable. Though all will be punished without end, the misery of one may be twice as great as that of another. But if the doom of all the wicked is annihilation, and *this* is that "everlasting punishment" spoken of by our Lord, where are the degrees of suffering in non-existence? Beyond doubt it is the vengeance which Christ takes at the day of judgment on them that know not God, that shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for Capernaum. But this vengeance is expressly defined to be "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." If now annihilation be what is meant, how can that be more tolerable for Sodom than Capernaum? But if it be the suffering that *precedes* annihilation, then we have "everlasting destruction," which is the vengeance which Christ takes on the wicked, before it begins.—*Rev. E. Barrow, D.D.*

[16697] If eternal punishment did not admit of degrees, neither would eternal rewards. Equality of continuance admits easily of degrees of misery, as fine and as manifold as are the deserts of the condemned.—*Marshall Randles.*

## XII. PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

1 He who refuses to be blessed makes himself accursed, and thereby chooses the inevitable penalty pronounced by the Judge.

[16698] The torments of the lost must not be regarded as merely an arbitrary infliction of punishment from the hand of God, but as the natural and necessary result of depraved character. We must not suppose that there is nought to prevent the sinner entering heaven but the merciless determination of an angry God not to admit him. The misery of the condemned sinner will mainly spring from within himself. There will be the unquenchable fire of self-reproach, the never-dying worm of an accusing conscience, the scorpion-stings of remorse, the bottomless pit of despair, and this intensified by the sight of those who are "unholy still, filthy still." This—is this is enough to make the lot one of "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."—*Rev. J. Hitchens, D.D.*

[16699] It is plainly possible that a man may fall into free permanent dissimilarity of feeling with God, or fail to attain a predominant desire to be holy. If he does, it remains scientifically certain that even Omnipotence and Omniscience cannot force upon such a character blessedness. There can be no blessedness without holiness; and there can be no holiness without a supreme love of what God loves, and a supreme hate of what God hates. It is possible that a man may so disarrange his nature as not to attain a permanent and predominant desire to be holy.—*J. Cook.*

[16700] (1) Man's future doom is what he will have chosen; (2) is what he will have deserved; (3) is what he will have fitted himself for (cf. Acts i. 25).—*Dean Ramsay.*

2 "Flee from the wrath to come"—"Why will ye die?"

[16701] "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." *Who* says this? Who utters this awful condemnation? This is no raving of ignorance or fanaticism; no boast of vindictive cruelty; no figure of rhetorical fancy. All these words fell from the lips of Christ, the gentle, loving Son of God, the Friend of sinners. They fell from the lips of Him who came into the world that, through faith in Himself, men should not perish, but have everlasting life. They mean all that the cross means; for it was because the Saviour knew the awful eternity that is before the wicked that He died to redeem us from hell. Ah, these are Christ's own words, and therefore do they take away hope. And *why* did He utter them? That you and I might fear; that you and I might flee!—might fear the just punishment of our sins; might flee from the wrath to come! That you and I might turn from sin; that you and I might come to Him, and through His cross gain everlasting life. Not to affright our souls with images of horror, not to distract our fancy with exaggerated terrors, not to excite our nerves at the expense of reason, not to put into the hands of priests and religious enthusiasts and demagogues an instrument of terror to govern the weak; no, no, not for any such reason as *they* allege, who deny future punishment, did the Son of God, the Friend of sinners, the meek, the gentle, bleeding, dying Lamb of Calvary, give us this solemn warning of the future punishment of the ungodly. It was that we might not die, but turn and live.—*Rev. J. Thompson, D.D.*





## SECTIONAL INDEX.

## SECTION XV.

## CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS.

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